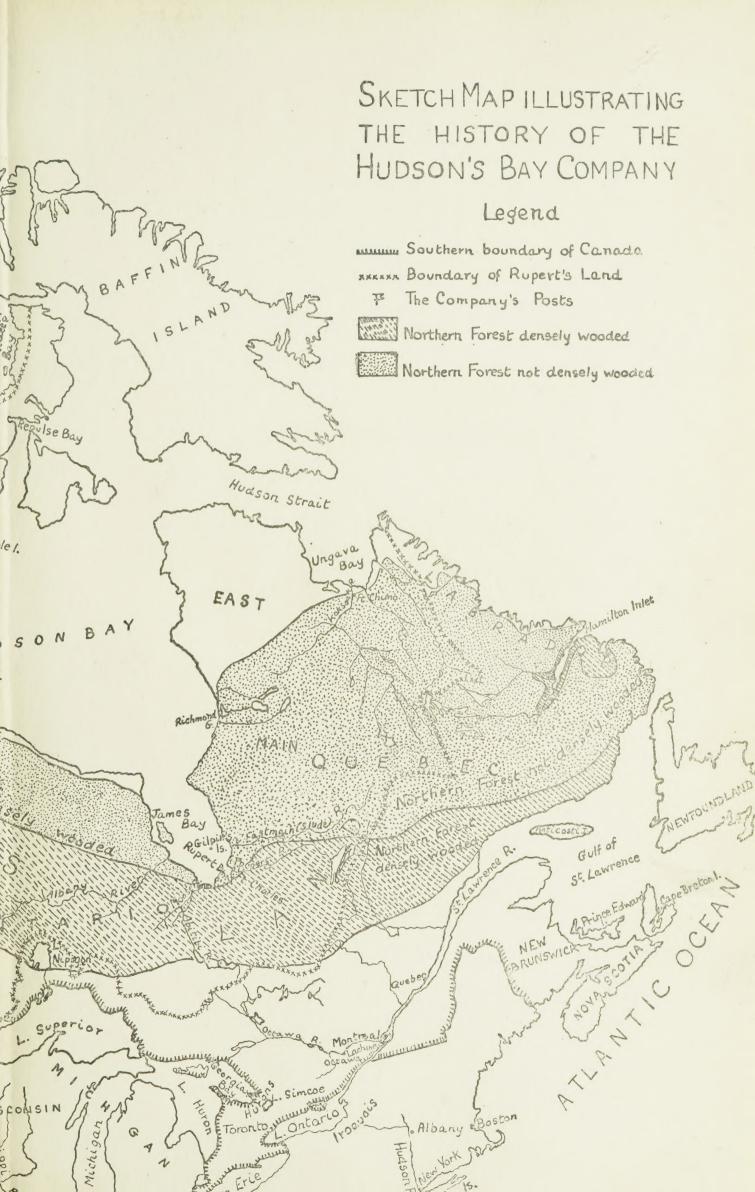


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H.H. Prince Rupert, First Governor

# Hudson's Bay Company. INCORPORATED 249 MAY 1670.

# A Brief History



Hudson's Bay House, London, E.C.2.

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#### FOREWORD

by
Patrick Ashley Cooper, Esq.
Thirtieth Governor

This summer on board the Company's Supply Ship, R.M.S. Nascopie, I have sailed into Hudson's Bay by the old Fur Trade route and have visited our Trading Posts in the Eastern Canadian Arctic. I have thus been able to see our Trade carried on under conditions but little different from those of two and a half centuries ago. The life is lonely, the work arduous and demanding initiative and courage. There is little place for modern comforts or mechanical aids, and our men must have the same resourcefulness and must show the same high character in dealing with the natives as distinguished the early servants of the Company. In a great modern city one may perhaps feel far from the old days. But in the North, where civilization can make little advance, one is immediately conscious of the glamour and excitement of our Company's history. I therefore welcome this new presentation of the story of the Great Company and hope that its readers may be able to recapture some of the atmosphere of romance and adventure which I discovered in the North.

The Hudson's Bay Company has seldom entered the field of publishing. The old Fur Trade surrounded its operations with a veil of secrecy and was inclined to resist any public interest in its affairs. In our own times widespread interest in the Company's history, and the Company's intimate association with the development of Western Canada, have made it our duty to tell our Story.

This Book has been prepared for two major purposes; first, to meet the growing public demand for some short narrative, and, second, to encourage the young men entering the Service to read more widely of the history of

V

the Great Company; for both they and the Company must benefit from a more real appreciation of great deeds.

Prominent in the lists of the Company's servants are the names of some of the greatest pioneers and explorers in Canadian history. Each one of these started at the bottom and by infusing into his daily work as a trader a spirit of daring and adventure, built up his glorious record which has been the inspiration of those who came after. It may be thought that under modern conditions there is no longer scope for great deeds; but the exploits of the Company's servants of to-day in every field of its activity prove that, given the necessary courage and imagination, the road to fresh conquests is still wide open.

While we praise the great adventurers, we must not forget all those whose work, while not spectacular, has contributed steadily and faithfully to the progress of our Company. Not everyone is able to distinguish himself in the eyes of the world; and the achievements of the great adventurers would have been of little avail without the conscientious and unremitting labour of the rank and file. This should be remembered as a continuous background to our story, that honour may be done to the men whom history does not remember but without whom it could never have been made.

London, 1934.

Governor.

## Contents

	MAP ILLUSTRATING H.B.C. HISTORY -	-	est.	
	(1n)	iside f	ront cove	
	FOREWORD BY THE GOVERNOR -	-		· V
	GOVERNORS OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPA		-	ix
I.	BEGINNING OF THE AMERICAN FUR TRADE		-	I
II.	SEARCH FOR THE NORTH WEST PASSAGE	-	-	2
III.	GROSEILLIERS GOES NORTH	out:	-	3
IV.	GRANTING OF THE CHARTER	-	-	6
V.	STRUGGLES WITH THE FRENCH -	-	-	7
VI.	HENRY KELSEY AND JAMES KNIGHT -		stin	10
VII.	TRADE RIVALRY WITH THE FRENCH -	***		12
VIII.	Company's Servants Penetrate the West	[, -	<b>-</b>	13
IX.	SAMUEL HEARNE	-	-	14
X.	RIVALRY OF THE NORTH WEST COMPANY	400	***	18
XI.	RED RIVER COLONY	-	-	20
XII.	Union of H.B.C. and North West Comp.	ANY	-	22
XIII.	SIR GEORGE SIMPSON	-	-	2.4
XIV.	FURTHER COMPANY EXPLORATION -	-	-	27
XV.	THE COMPANY ON THE PACIFIC COAST AN	D IN	THE	
	Oregon	-	-	30
XVI.	VANCOUVER ISLAND		and	3 3
XVII.	PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE, 1857 -	***	***	34
XVIII.	COMMISSIONED OFFICERS	_	249	35
XIX.	TRANSFER OF RUPERT'S LAND TO THE C	ROWN	-	36
XX.	FOLLOWING THE DEED OF SURRENDER	-	-	37
XXI.	Donald A. Smith	-	-	39
	PROGRESS WITH ADVANCE OF CIVILIZATIO	N -	-	40
	THE COMPANY TO-DAY	***	-	44
XXIV.	THE FUR TRADE	**	-	45
XXV.	Transport	100	-	47
XXVI.	LAND	-	-	
XXVII.	Department Stores	-	-	48
XVIII.	LONDON FUR WAREHOUSE	-	-	49
XXIX.	Governor in the Arctic, 1934 -		_	5 I
XXX.	CHIEF FUR BEARING ANIMALS -	-	-	5 3
	COAT OF ARMS, H.B.C.	-	-	68
	Map Shewing H.B.C. Organization in	(Insid	IADA, le back d	cover
	1934	1-11-21-11		

## List of Illustrations

H.H. PRINCE RUPERT, FIRST GOVERNOR	2	-	-		Frontisp	rece
"Nonsuch"	-	-	-		facing page	5
ROYAL CHARTER (PART) 1670	-	emin	-	-	,,	6
FIRST SALE OF FURS AT GARRAWAY'S C	OFFEE	Ho	USE,	167	2 ,,	6
DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH, THIRD GOVE			_	_	,,	II
Samuel Hearne	-	***	-	-	"	14
PRINCE OF WALES'S FORT	-	-	***	9100	,,	14
SIOUX INDIAN CHIEF	-	1000	***		,,	23
SIR GEORGE SIMPSON	-	-	_	_	,,	24
SIR GEORGE SIMPSON IN CANOE	-	000	-	***	,,	25
Norway House Fur Trade Post -	***	-	-	-	"	3 I
DONALD A. SMITH, FIRST BARON STRATE	HCON	A ANI	о Мо	UN'		
TWENTY-SIXTH GOVERNOR -	ate	-	840	-	,,	39
Hudson's Bay House, London		400		elan.	,,	45
WOLSTENHOLME POST—HUDSON BAY	***	_	desir.	***	33	46
s.s. "Beaver"	***	***	min	-	and follow	ving
s.s. "Distributor"	_		_		22	
s.s. "Nascopie"	-	-	-		"	
FARM HOMESTEAD	***	_	-	fa	cing page	47
FORT GARRY FUR TRADE POST	**	-	-	_	99	48
DEPARTMENT STORE, WINNIPEG -	-	_		ann .	22	•
DEPARTMENT STORE, CALGARY	***	-	_	***	and follon	ving
DEPARTMENT STORE, VANCOUVER -	epite.	_	-	esta	"	C
Beaver House, London	_	***	_	-	"	
Inspecting Silver Fox—Beaver Hou	JSE	-	-	-	22	
INSPECTING WHITE FOX—BEAVER HO			_	ness	22	
INSPECTING ERMINE—BEAVER HOUSE	-	-	-	-	22	
Beaver Hall Entrance		-	we	846	>>	
H.B.C. SALE ROOM—SALE IN PROGRES	S -		Ser-	100	"	
PATRICK ASHLEY COOPER, Esq., THIRT		Govi	ERNO	R		5 I
Beaver				-		53
Bear		400	-	Spilly.		54
Ermine		***	-	940	100 cats	56
Fisher	4000	-	-	_		57
Silver Fox		_	-	_		58
Lynx	_			_		59
MARTEN OR CANADIAN SABLE	_	qua	_		ma 00	60
Mink	**			-		61
Musquash or Musk-Rat	400		6449	NAME OF THE PARTY OF	-	62
Otter	490	dies.	Male	40	***	63
RACCOON	-	ana .	***	de	10 40	64
Skunk				_		65
Wolf	60%	***	MAR	High	900 900	66
Wolverine or Glutton		_	44	-		67

## Governors of the Hudson's Bay Company

00,000000				1 /
HIS HIGHNESS PRINCE RUPERT				1670/1682
H.R.H. JAMES, DUKE OF YORK (AFT	rerv	VARD	S	
King James II)				1683/1685
JOHN, LORD CHURCHILL (AFTERWAL		Duk	E	
of Marlborough)	_	-	-	1685/1692
SIR STEPHEN EVANCE	_	-	esti	1692/1696
RT. HON. SIR WILLIAM TRUMBULL		-	man .	1696/1700
SIR STEPHEN EVANCE	-		-	1700/1712
SIR BIBYE LAKE, BART	_	-	-	1712/1743
BENJAMIN PITT	-	-	-	1743/1746
THOMAS KNAPP	-	eni.	-	1746/1750
SIR ATWELL LAKE, BART	_	100		1750/1760
SIR WILLIAM BAKER	-	-	***	1760/1770
BIBYE LAKE	-	with	-	1770/1782
SAMUEL WEGG	***	pulh	-	1782/1799
SIR JAMES WINTER LAKE, BART.	-	-	-	1799/1807
WILLIAM MAINWARING	-603		-	1807/1812
Joseph Berens, Junior		-	-	1812/1822
SIR JOHN HENRY PELLY, BART.	-	-	ont	1822/1852
Andrew Colvile	-	-	-	1852/1856
JOHN SHEPHERD	-	-	-	1856/1858
HENRY HULSE BERENS	-	-	-	1858/1863
RT. HON. SIR EDMUND WALKE	ER .	HEAD	D,	
BART., K.C.B	-	-	este.	1863/1868
Rt. Hon. The Earl of Kimberle	Y	-	-	1868/1869
Rt. Hon. Sir Stafford H. N	ORTI	HCOT	E,	
BART., M.P. (EARL OF IDDES)	LEIG	н)		1869/1874
Rt. Hon. George Joachim Gosci	HEN,	M.I		1874/1880
EDEN COLVILE	-	**	-	1880/1889
DONALD A. SMITH, BARON STRAT	HCO:	NA A	ND	
MOUNT ROYAL, G.C.M.G.				1889/1914
SIR THOMAS SKINNER, BART.				1914/1916
SIR ROBERT MOLESWORTH KINDER	SLEY	, G.I	3.E.	1916/1925
CHARLES VINCENT SALE				1925/1931
PATRICK ASHLEY COOPER	-	-	-	1931/

The Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company desire to acknowledge their indebtedness to Arthur S. Morton, Professor of History in the University of Saskatchewan, Douglas MacKay, Publicity Officer for the Company in Canada, R. H. G. Leveson Gower, Archivist, and J. Chadwick Brooks, Secretary of the Company, for their assistance in the compilation of this brief history of the Company.

## HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

### A BRIEF HISTORY

I. The Beginning of the American Fur Trade.

When America was discovered it was a continent clad with forests in which roamed fur-bearing animals of many kinds. The Indians hunted these animals, fed on their flesh and clothed themselves in their skins. The favourite robe was beaver. The scraping of the inner side of the beaver skins loosened the roots of the long outer hairs so that they fell out and left the soft and beautiful inner wool on the surface. The first Europeans to get an inkling of the fur resources of America were the fishermen in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. When they landed to dry the cod, they would meet the Indians and covet their beaver robes as curiosities. At their offer of knives, fish-hooks and the like, the Indians, who felt no shame in nakedness, would strip and effect the exchange.

A fur trade, however, could only be established by a great demand in the European market. This came through a new fashion in hats. From about the time of Charles I large felt hats adorned with a surface of fur became the vogue. The hat-makers soon learned that the beaver wool was spiccated, that is, had fine barbs at the end of the hairs which made them stick to the felt. Forthwith the demand for beaver became great and the trade in furs with America advanced by leaps and bounds. That the beaver skins were wanted not to wear but for hats is indicated by the motto of the Hudson's Bay Company—pro pelle cutem—which was probably first intended to mean the skin for the fur. Later it was interpreted in terms of the trade which had made the beaver skin the standard value—a skin of goods for a skin of fur, in a word, a fair deal.

II. The Search for the North West Passage.

The search for a route to the rich markets of the Far East did much to reveal to the Europeans the great resources in fur of the region which is now Canada.\* The Portuguese had the route to India by Cape of Good Hope, the Spaniards that by Cape Horn but better still that by Panama, where the Pacific is only about fifty miles from the waters of the Atlantic. The French, English and Dutch came into the game late. Each of these nations hoped to find a waterway of its own to the valuable trade of China. Jacques Cartier hoped to find it for the French by the opening in the coast known as the Gulf of St. Lawrence. His course was arrested at the Rapids of Lachine, just beyond Montreal, but he had found a magnificent water-route running south of the great fur-belt of the north. The result was the French fur trade.

After the failure of Martin Frobisher's attempt to get round the northern shore of America, the English, and, like them, the Dutch, were trying the polar shore of Asia. It was here that Henry Hudson gained his experience as an Arctic explorer. On a journey for the Dutch he was held fast in ice and his crew mutinied. He secured obedience by an agreement to cross the Atlantic and try an opening in the American coast at Long Island. This led to the discovery of the Hudson River, another waterway leading toward the fur fields of the north. When Hudson returned to England he was commandeered to explore the remaining break in the coast of America, namely our Hudson Strait. He discovered the Bay which bears his name and wintered probably in Rupert Bay. He had found a route to the very edge of what is the greatest fur forest of the world. But Hudson went to his tragic death all unaware of what he

<sup>\* &</sup>quot;In 1494 Spain and Portugal signed the famous 'Treaty of Partition of the Ocean,' which gave Portugal everything east of a meridian passing 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde islands, and Spain everything west of that line."

Marshall, William I. Acquisition of Oregon and the Long Suppressed Evidence about Marcus Whitman, Part I, page 30 (Seattle, Lowman and Hanford Co., 1911).

had accomplished. It remained for Groseilliers and Radisson and through them the founders of the Hudson's Bay Company to reveal the value of his discovery for the fur trade. III. Groseilliers Goes North.

Here the importance to the Trade of the great forest belt which extends across the continent from Labrador to the Rocky Mountains, some three thousand miles, must be explained. Its predominant woods are poplar, birch and aspen, and, by the rivers, willow—all the favourite foods of the beaver. It is intersected by countless streams and lakes in which that semi-aquatic animal makes its home. There is no beaver area in the world like it. Moreover, the long and severe winter makes the pelts thick and of the finest quality. From the fur trader's point of view the northern forest was an Eldorado.

Bitter rivalry grew up between the French and the Dutch whose approach to this rich fur area was from the south. The Algonquins and the Hurons took the furs down to the French on the St. Lawrence and the Iroquois were the middlemen for the Dutch at Albany on the Hudson River. The rivalry of these middlemen resulted in the destruction of the Huron villages by the Iroquois armed with the white man's gun. The machinery of the French fur trade was destroyed.

The first great achievement of Groseilliers, who may be described as an Indianized Frenchman, was that he penetrated to the Great Lakes whither the Hurons had fled and persuaded them to continue bringing the furs down to the St. Lawrence. On his second voyage he took Radisson, his brother-in-law, with him. They discovered that most of the furs were brought by the Crees from the north, in fact, that the great northern forest was the source of the stream of furs going down to the French. They forthwith determined to see it with their own eyes. When the French Governor would not issue a license to them, except on the condition that he should enjoy the half of the profits, they

laughed him to scorn and went independently. From Lake Superior they entered the forest of the north, and crossed it to Rupert River. In 1663, they returned with a wonderful harvest of furs only to be charged with illicit trading and, on one ground and another, subjected to a series of fines which must have gone far to rob them of their profits.

Groseilliers crossed to France to seek redress but found none. When there, he made an effort to establish a fur trade for the French direct with Hudson Bay, but failed. He returned to Quebec and finding no way of prosecuting their venture he and Radisson with him went to Boston, where they met Sir George Carteret, Privy Councillor to Charles II, Vice-Chamberlain of the Household, Treasurer of the Navy and then on a commission to Massachusetts. Sir George took them with him to England and to the King, for he enjoyed direct access to the throne. The war with Holland and the command of the sea by the Dutch delayed action. Meanwhile Groseilliers and Radisson were housed in Windsor at the expense of the King.

It is not difficult to understand how two foreigners with a proposed trading expedition into a far-off wilderness could capture an audience among the courtiers of Charles II. England's colonies in America were firmly held and the horizons of the known world to which Hudson, Baffin and Frobisher had pointed still lured men westward.

Progress was not rapid and it was Prince Rupert, the King's cousin, who took up the project in 1667. Rupert of the Rhine was one of the brilliant Royalist figures of his time. A spectacular leader of cavalry in the English Civil War, an admiral of the fleet during the Dutch wars, an active worker in the art of engraving, and a patron of science, he was a true nobleman of the Stuart Restoration. His eager, searching mind must have grasped at the trade prospect. The men of Charles' court were brought into the plan. The Duke of York (who as James II came to the throne after Charles), Prince Rupert, the Duke of Albe-





The "Nonsuch"

marle, the Earls of Arlington, Craven and Shaftesbury, Sir George Carteret, and James Hayes, secretary to the Prince, entered their subscriptions, and the adventure was launched.

From the Royal Navy the King loaned The Eaglet, and those associated with the project outfitted the Nonsuch, a ketch. On June 3rd, 1668, Radisson in The Eaglet under Captain Stannard, and Groseilliers in the Nonsuch under Captain Zachariah Gillam of Boston, sailed down the Thames. Both ships crossed the North Atlantic, but on approaching Hudson Strait The Eaglet was damaged in a storm and compelled to turn back. Alone, the Nonsuch proceeded and arrived at a southern beach of James Bay on September 29th, 1668.

Groseilliers, a veteran woodsman, could have lost no time in putting his English seamen to work on the erection of a fort. Already September was nearly gone, and before the snow fell on the low lying shores of James Bay, Fort Charles was completed.

It was a poor log hut with a stockade but it was the corner stone of a great trading empire. No one has recorded the grumblings of the sailors as they huddled close to the fires during that winter of 1668-9, but their blunt comments could not have been kindly to the country, and certainly their most cheerful dreams could not have pictured the birth of a royal chartered company that was to flourish through the succeeding centuries.

Trade was established, and when the ice crunched down the Rupert River in the spring, Groseilliers—or, as the English called him, Mr. Gooseberry—was soon away in his fifty-ton Nonsuch, loaded with furs. The success of the voyage consolidated the group of courtier-investors. They applied to the King for a Royal Charter, which was granted on May 2nd, 1670. The chartering of companies by the Crown had been an established method of trade and territorial expansion for a century past. The Muscovy

Company, the Eastland Company, the Virginia Company, and the East India Company were examples of this commercial structure peculiar to the period.

#### IV. Granting of the Charter.

It was from a vigorous England that the Hudson's Bay Company was born in 1670. The full glory of Elizabethan rule had not faded, although the Queen had been dead since the third year of the century. Shakespeare had joined the immortals a half-century before, but Milton's *Paradise Lost* was a comparatively new book—only three years old. The Great Fire had swept London in 1666, and Christopher Wren was planning St. Paul's Cathedral.

A Stuart was on the throne again, though a Stuart King had been beheaded before the London mob twenty-one years earlier. Charles II in 1670 had already been King of England for a period of ten years. He had around him men who had fought for his father and suffered exile under the Commonwealth; men who knew adventure in war and peace. In arts, sciences and trade, there was a restlessness and an eagerness for new fields to conquer.

The Charter of the Hudson's Bay Company is still preserved in Hudson's Bay House, London. It consists of five sheets of parchment, each measuring thirty-one by twenty-five inches, and upon these are inscribed the truly imperial powers which "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay" were to enjoy.

Rights to "sole trade and commerce" within the entrance of Hudson Strait were bestowed by Charles upon "our dear and entirely beloved cousin Prince Rupert" and his associates. They were to be, said the charter, "the true and absolute Lordes and Proprietors." It is true that the King granted more territory than was then known to white men, but it was, as one writer has said, "the vehicle for the conveyance of an opportunity of limitless value, because it was



## Royal Charter (part), 1670



First Fur Sale at Garraway's Coffee House, 1672



rightly used, but which would have been of no worth had not those to whom it was granted and their successors known how to handle wisely the great affairs entrusted to

their charge."

In terms of geography to-day, the Adventurers were given the provinces of Ontario and Quebec north of the Laurentian Hills and west of the Labrador boundary, the whole of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, the southern half of Alberta, and the south-east corner of the Dominion's North West Territories. It proved to be a well-drawn Charter, for it withstood all attacks upon its validity despite countless examinations in courts of law.

To Radisson and Groseilliers it was a fur trading venture, and to secure support for it they had held out hopes of a sea route to the Orient—that long sought North West Passage which was to draw men to explore the Arctic seas for nearly two centuries more.

V. Struggles with the French.

The French in Quebec and Montreal were quick to take up the challenge of the English entry into the American fur trade from the north. For ninety years the English and the French struggled for the trade. It was war with interludes of peace until 1713, but there occurred outbreaks of violence on the shores of the Bay simultaneously with periods of peace in Europe. To the casual reader this aspect becomes a distant skyline of foundering ships and burning forts. Actually there were many quiet and monotonous years of Indian trading.

The winter, the wilderness, the spirit-breaking distances and the small parties of men engaged, make these forest skirmishes appear fantastic when viewed as military operations yet they were highly significant in the history of Canada and assumed importance in the peace conferences

of Europe.

The fact that the Company had held on nobly to the Bay for Britain during the troublous years prior to 1713 served

them in good stead when their Charter Rights came to be considered by a Parliamentary Committee in 1749.

Rupert's House is separated from Montreal by 600 miles of forest, lake and river. York Factory is 3,000 miles from Europe by the North Atlantic and Hudson Strait. The hazard and hardship entailed by these distances must be understood if the nature of the conflicts is to be appreciated.

In the early years of the Company's activities the fur trade was profitable and before 1680 there were forts at Rupert River (later Rupert's House), Moose and Albany Factories on James Bay, as well as Fort Nelson (later York Factory) on the west coast of Hudson Bay. But the grip on the territory was none too firm.

Out of the forests to the south in 1686 came a French nobleman, Chevalier de Troyes, with thirty veteran French soldiers. They made short work of Fort Rupert, capturing its sixteen English traders, and with the waving of swords and speeches worthy of a great conquest, proclaimed a victory for the "King of France and Navarre." Moose and Albany Factories fell quickly to their vigorous attacks but the Company still clung to York Factory (formerly called "Nelson"). One of the outstanding achievements of these years was the retention of the Company's foothold. Raided from land and sea, its log forts reduced to ashes, its men and goods seized, there was always in the darkest days at least one post where the flag was kept flying.

Three Company ships under an experienced naval officer, Captain Grimington, wintered at York Factory, and when the ice opened up in the spring of 1693 they moved south and recaptured Albany Factory. The following year two French men-of-war landed guns before York and forced its surrender after a siege of nineteen days.

There was an English youth, Henry Kelsey, at the fort and for his bravery in action the Governor and Committee later awarded him fifty pounds. Of Kelsey more will be said later. In 1696 there was a naval race for York Factory and the French ships came within sight of the fort two hours after the British had occupied the mouth of the Nelson River. Frenchmen, furs and supplies were seized and York Factory was again English.

The fur traders from England were in possession of York and Albany Factories at the beginning of 1697, and were endeavouring to recoup their losses when the roar of gunfire heralded the greatest sea fight in the history of the Arctic. The French had secured the support of their King for one more attempt to drive the Company from the Bay. Five French vessels under Pierre Lemoine Sieur d'Iberville, who had been present at the assault on Fort Rupert in 1686, arrived in Hudson Strait only forty hours after four British ships. The Pelican, the French flag ship, under d'Iberville, became separated from her consorts, and anchored off York Factory to await their arrival. But the English arrived first and d'Iberville took them on single handed—one against three—the fourth English, the Owner's Love, being a fire ship. For four hours they fought, d'Iberville's Pelican was raked fore and aft but she resisted all attempts to board her. With startling suddenness the English man-of-war Hampshire ceased fire, lurched and sank, taking with her two hundred and ninety men. Soon the Hudson's Bay surrendered with one hundred and ninety men. The third ship, the Dering, escaped into the mouth of the Nelson River. A storm swept down the Bay before d'Iberville could put his captured ship (the Hudson's Bay) in order, and he was compelled to beach the foundering Pelican six miles north of York Factory. Twenty-three of his men were drowned in their attempt to reach the shore through the icy waters. The arrival of the other French ships strengthened his forces, and he was able to transport his guns across the rocks and to demand the surrender of York Factory.

Captain Bailey, who was in command for the Company, had with him men whose courage was beyond question and who were prepared to fight it out—Grimington of the Dering, Smithsend of the ill-fated Hudson's Bay, Henry Kelsey and others. Bailey at first refused to give up the fort, but later haggled for terms, and finally led his garrison out with drums beating and flags flying. Grimington was allowed his ship and returned to England accompanied by Governor Bailey and the refugees. Again the Adventurers were left with but a single post on the Bay, Albany Factory.

In the Courts of Europe the Treaty of Ryswick was signed in 1697. It brought an interlude of peace to Hudson Bay and it left the Company almost ruined.

A history of the Hudson's Bay Company, however brief, cannot be limited to a mere narration of its progress as a corporation. The character of a Company is formed by the men who direct and serve it. Rupert and his Royalist friends, Radisson and Groseilliers, with their trader-explorer restlessness, all gave character to the Company in its early years.

The seamen and traders who were the servants of the Company did not adapt themselves readily to life in the wilderness. The Indians to be traded with were savages and therefore to be distrusted, and the forests beyond the shores of the Bay were full of unknown terrors. Despite pressure from the Governor and Committee in London, it was not until twenty years after the founding of the Company that an inland journey was undertaken.

#### VI. Henry Kelsey and James Knight.

Henry Kelsey, apprentice, age fourteen, came into Hudson Bay in 1684, receiving eight pounds and "two shutes of apparell" for his next four years' wages. In 1690 he undertook a journey into the prairie lands, an achievement which gives him immortality among English explorers.





John, Lord Churchill, later Duke of Marlborough—third Governor

A courageous, enterprising youth, he learned the Cree language and adapted himself to Indian life. Two winters he spent in the Valley of the Saskatchewan with his base camp near the Pas. His purpose was to encourage peace among the Indian tribes so that they could bring their beaver pelts to York Factory without fear of attack. He was the first of the Company's servants to establish that understanding of the natives and intimacy which was to prove the most powerful factor in the development of the fur trade in Canada. Enemies of the Company later tried to discredit his journals as fabrications, merely "written up" with the intention of proving that the Company had not neglected to carry out the exploration required by the Charter.

The Kelsey journals became the subject of political and later historical controversy which was not finally cleared up until 1926 when many of his papers were discovered in a castle in Northern Ireland amongst documents owned by the descendants of Arthur Dobbs who had attacked the Company in the eighteenth century.

It is enough to state here that the apprentice Kelsey was the first of the English fur traders to experience the glamour of travel in the Canadian north and to suffer its discomforts. A high-spirited lad, he wrote part of his journal in quaint rhyme. He was the first white man to see the musk ox and the buffalo. He lived to be Governor of York Factory and the records contain references to his continued interest in "discovery to ye Norward."

From d'Iberville's sea and land victory in 1697, until France and England settled their affairs in Europe by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, the Company's one post on the Bay was Albany. (The Duke of Marlborough who led British arms to the victory which brought the peace in Europe had been a Governor of the Company). The treaty brought the Bay forts back to the Company, and in September, 1714, James Knight and his deputy, Henry Kelsey,

with commissions from Queen Anne, took over York Factory from the French Governor Jérémie. The Company was now to have nearly seventy years of peaceful trading. Knight was one of the first to establish strict discipline both within the forts and in the relations with the Indians. Indian tribal wars were detrimental to fur trading, and peace among the natives became the main object of Knight's efforts.

The Crees would ambush and rob the Chipewyans on their way to York Factory. In 1715 Knight sent William Stewart into the interior as an arbitrator of peace. He crossed the Barren Lands to the forests south of Great Slave Lake, and there held a great council of the tribes. But two years later the Crees were on the war-path again, and Knight built a post north of York Factory at the mouth of the Churchill River to enable the Chipewyans from Great Slave and Athabasca Lakes to bring furs to the Bay in safety. Thus Churchill (then known as Prince of Wales's Fort) was established, and as Knight says in his journal of July 16th, 1717, "I never see such A Misserable Place in all my Life." The site of the post he established was, he added, "the place where the Danes had wintred," meaning Jens Munck's expedition of 1619-20. Knight, ambitious and enterprising, had heard rumours amongst the Indians of copper to the far north, and in 1719 he went north with two ships to discover new wealth for the Company. They were wrecked on Marble Island off the west coast of the Bay and Knight and his companions died miserably of starvation. To this day Eskimos, after landing on Marble Island, cross the sands from the water's edge on their knees, in deference to the spirits of Knight and his men.

#### VII. Trade rivalry with the French.

The French were not idle. The fur trade wealth west of the Great Lakes was not to be left to the Adventurers who traded only from comfortable forts on Hudson Bay. In June, 1731, a party of fifty Frenchmen under Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, Sieur de la Vérendrye, started westward from Montreal. The merchants of Montreal had supplied goods for trading with the Indians. With la Vérendrye were his three sons and La Jemeraye, the second in command—a gallant band of traders and explorers who during the succeeding seventeen years were to meet, with conspicuous courage, every form of hardship and privation known to travellers in the northern wilderness. Their trading activities cut into the Company's trade at the forts on the Bay, and, while they did not discover the western sea, they crossed the prairies to the foot of the Rockies, and thus unrolled the map of North America westward to the mountains.

The new French trading posts reached as far west as Central Saskatchewan, including Fort St. Pierre near Rainy Lake, Fort St. Charles on the Lake of the Woods, Fort Maurepas at the mouth of the Winnipeg River, Fort La Reine some fifteen miles east of Portage la Prairie, Fort Dauphin on Mossy River, Fort Bourbon on Cedar Lake, Fort Paskoyac at the Pas, and La Corne's post below the Forks of the Saskatchewan River. Here indeed was a challenge to the Charter rights granted by Charles II to the Adventurers. Trade goods were brought to the very hunting grounds of the Indian, saving him the long and hazardous trip to the Bay posts.

Under firm instructions from the Committee in London, a series of one-man expeditions pressed into the prairie, the forest and the Barren Lands during the eighteenth century.

VIII. Company's Servants penetrate the West.

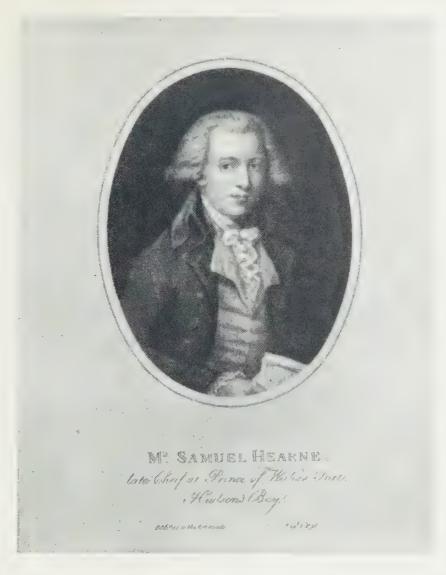
Anthony Henday, said to have been an outlawed English smuggler, left York Factory on June 26th, 1754, travelling with a band of Indians. Henday's mission was to meet Indians wherever possible and to persuade them to make

the long trip to the Bay even though the French traders, trading mostly in brandy, were living in their midst. Henday, living like a native, travelled up the Hayes River across to the Saskatchewan, and westward into the valley of the Red Deer River in Alberta. He wintered within sight of the Rocky Mountains, and on his eastward journey he encountered the French traders near Basquia (the Pas). Relations were friendly but the Indians whom Henday was leading to York Factory with their furs traded their pelts to the French for brandy. He was back at York in five days less than a year following his departure. Henday's journal was somewhat discredited by his superiors at the fort, who doubted his description of Indians hunting buffalo on horseback. His journey as we can see it now was one demanding the greatest courage.

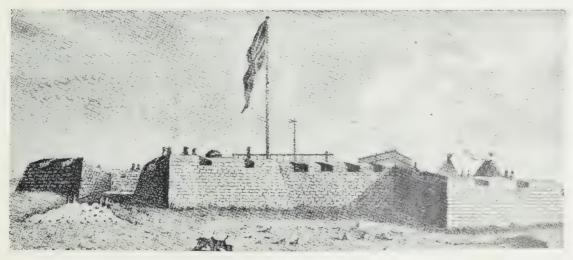
Between 1754 and 1774 when Cumberland House, the first interior post was built, sixty inland voyages were made with the object of stimulating the Indian trade. In a brief history such as this, it is only possible to outline a few of these thrusts into the interior. For example, William Pink left York Factory in July, 1767. Abandoning his canoe at La Corne he travelled on foot through the country north of Prince Albert westward to the Beaver River which he followed to its source. At one time he must have been near the height of land west of Lac la Biche and within sight of the Athabasca River country. He was back at York Factory within the year.

#### IX. Samuel Hearne.

The most conspicuous of the Company's exploitations in the eighteenth century was Samuel Hearne's journey to the Coppermine River. Privately educated, Hearne entered the Navy at the age of ten. In 1766 he was mate on a Company whaling ship and later stationed at Prince of Wales's Fort, the great stone fortress which had succeeded Knight's wooden Fort on the Churchill River. When Moses Norton,



Samuel Hearne



Prince of Wales's Fort



the half breed governor of the fort, was instructed to send his best man out to discover the rumoured copper deposits of the north, as well as the NorthWest Passage which was supposed to lead to the Orient, Samuel Hearne was chosen.

On November 6th, 1769, Hearne left the fort accompanied by salutes from the guns. Deserted by his Indians, who stole his supplies, he was compelled to return a month later to Prince of Wales's Fort "to my own great mortification and to the no small surprise of the Governor." In February he was off again only to return nine months later robbed by Indians and his scientific instruments destroyed by a storm. Undaunted, Hearne made a third attempt, starting almost at once from the bleak shore into the dreaded Barrens in December, 1770. This time he had as companion Matonabbie, one of those rare and romantic Indians who combine all the qualities of nobility and courage which fiction attributes to the redskin.

Hunger pursued them across the far north throughout the winter. On June 21st the sun did not set: the Arctic Circle had been reached. A month later Hearne stood at the mouth of the Coppermine River on the Arctic Coast. He was the first white man to reach the Arctic Sea from the interior. The map was unrolling northward. His joy of discovery and the satisfaction of claiming the land for the Company were mingled with horror as he witnessed an Indian massacre of an Eskimo tribe. He was back within the sheltering walls of Prince of Wales's Fort on June 30th, 1772, after an absence of eighteen months and twenty-three days. The Company rewarded him with two hundred pounds.

Hearne doubted if his discoveries would be of any great advantage to the Company or to the nation. "Yet I have pleasure to think," he wrote later, "that I have complied with the orders of my masters and that it has put to a final end all disputes concerning a Northwest Passage." Hearne

also hoped that his discoveries would "wipe off in some measure the ill-grounded and unjust" aspersions of critics who had been charging the Company with neglect of exploration and trade expansion. Hearne could not foresee that, for a century later, many Britons were to perish in the Arctic in search of the passage, and that the Company was not to be free of political enemies for generations to come.

Hearne established Cumberland House in 1774, and, early in 1776, took over command of Prince of Wales's Fort.

Kelsey, Henday, Pink and Hearne have been selected from the records of the Company's first century, partly for their explorations, but more particularly because they all displayed the capacity to travel fast and far, to live at peace with the natives, and to keep good journals—accomplishments which were to enrich the Company's life through out the nineteenth century. All four were young men, Kelsey and Hearne being still in the twenties. They were the fore-runners of the lean, leathery men of the fur trade to come, men with self-discipline, who talked little but kept their records in good order. So exploration went on, not by the spectacular exploits of magnificently equipped expeditions, but by simple fur traders whose wages could have been the least of their rewards.

It is an oddity of the Company's long story that fur traders should have built and maintained the greatest stone fortification in America (excepting possibly Quebec) on Hudson Bay at the mouth of the Churchill River. Prince of Wales's Fort was constructed from plans prepared by military engineers on Eskimo Point, a low arm reaching out in natural protection of Churchill harbour. The foundations were laid in 1732, for by that time the Hudson's Bay Company had learned that wooden palisades were not enough and there must be one powerful base of operations on the Bay. Its walls, bastions and cannon must have appeared as symbolic of imperial power—a fulfilment of some of the impressive phrases of the Royal Charter itself.

From 1732 to 1771 the construction went on laboriously until at last the walls, thirty to forty feet thick, must have given the Adventurers a sense of security for all time. It proved to be an illusion of stone and mortar, for, on an August day in 1782, La Perouse, the celebrated French admiral-geographer, appeared with three ships and four hundred men. Hearne, the Governor, who had but thirtynine men within the walls, surrendered without a shot. It was one of those incidents about which historians have since engaged in controversy. Was it ignoble, or was it discreet? Why were there but thirty-nine men to man the forty-two cannon? These are questions to be studied and answered in histories yet to be written. The Frenchman appreciated Hearne as a brother in exploration, and permitted him to retain his maps and journals. But Prince of Wales's Fort was sacked and the French sailors worked for two days attempting to blow up the fortress with only slight success. A year later Hearne was back at Churchill and a log fort was built five miles up the river. To-day the main walls of Prince of Wales's Fort still stand, an historic site owned by the Dominion of Canada, while the Hudson's Bay Company continues trading in the little community which has grown up at this sub-Arctic port and railway terminus.

Wolfe had taken Quebec in 1759, and the next year Montreal surrendered to the British. The military conquest of Canada was complete, although the vastness of the country demanded a conquest of a different character. Trade speedily followed the flag, and by 1761 English traders were approaching the shores of Lake Superior. For twenty years independent traders were pressing westward competing bitterly with each other; and all against the Hudson's Bay Company.

The struggle with the French had not been just the rivalry of the two nations. It had been the competition of

two routes—the Hudson Bay and the Montreal routes—for the trade of the great fur forest of the north. Accordingly, British subjects in Montreal followed in the footsteps of La Vérendrye into the North West, built posts among the Indians and once more diverted the furs into the Montreal route. In 1774 the Company countered by building Cumberland House, hard by the Saskatchewan, and began to build posts in opposition to the men from Montreal. These, however, went farther and farther afield.

### X. Rivalry of the North West Company.

By 1784 the North West Company, a grouping of nine different fur trading interests, was in existence. It was to become the most powerful of all the Company's rivals. Shrewd, thrusting, Scottish-Canadian traders from Montreal, with courage and enterprise, built a commercial structure which spanned the continent and defied the Royal Charter. Frobisher, McTavish, Mackenzie, McGillivray, Todd, Sutherland, MacKay, McLoughlin—the names of these North West Company partners suggest the character of the organization. These "wintering partners" lived and worked in the west. Across the prairie, into the Athabasca country, across the Rockies, and even to the Arctic Ocean they travelled, vigorously competing in the fur trade and defying the monopoly rights of "the English" as they called the Company's men, who in turn described the Nor'westers as "the Canadians" or the "French Traders."

Forts were built side by side at strategic trading points, but before the North West and the Hudson's Bay Companies merged in 1821 there was to be violence, bloodshed, and a bewildering flood of seizures, warrants, arrests and court actions.

At first the Hudson's Bay Company was dilatory in meeting this new challenge, but, as the conflict for trade

progressed, the old Company exchanged blow for blow until at the time of the union their fur returns were increasing once more after a long period of diminished collections. Rum had become an accepted trading article as an essential means of meeting the competition of irresponsible free traders, and it so continued until the full power of the Company came into effective operation.

Above all the Northwesters stood Alexander Mackenzie. He followed Peter Pond, a notorious fur trader and soldier of fortune, into the far north west. It was to shake off the cost of transportation to that distant region, and not from scientific curiosity or the simple spirit of adventure that Mackenzie undertook his expeditions.

From Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca in 1789—when young Napoleon Bonaparte was an obscure artillery subaltern, and the Paris mob stormed the Bastille—he descended to the Arctic by the river now bearing his name, sixteen hundred miles and back in one hundred and two days. The map of Canada went farther north, but Mackenzie was disappointed in having found no outlet to the Pacific.

Like Hearne, he believed he had shattered the illusion of the North West Passage. It was in 1793 that he went up the Peace River, struggled across the Rockies, and wrote on a rock on the shores of the Pacific: "Alexander Mackenzie, by land, twenty-second of July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three."

He returned to London to publish his famous Voyages, to be knighted by his King, and to become the most famous fur trader of his time. His fertile brain now produced a plan for the union of all the fur trading interests including the Hudson's Bay Company in one grand chartered Company having the use of the Hudson Bay route. The North West Company's chief aim was now to capture the Hudson Bay route. In 1804, through Edward Ellice in London, they tried to buy out the English Company but failed.

In 1805 the North West Company offered the Company £2,000 for the right to use the Hudson Bay route. In 1808 Mackenzie was endeavouring through Lord Selkirk to buy a controlling interest in the Company with the view of absorbing it into the North West Company, but Lord Selkirk, whose aim was a seat on the Board of the Hudson's Bay Company, after buying the shares, kept them and, with Andrew Wedderburn, better known as Andrew Colvile, turned to the task of reorganizing the Company.

#### XI. Red River Colony.

At this time Lord Selkirk controlled the Hudson's Bay Company. His Red River Colony plan was launched in the interests of impoverished Scottish farmers. Apart from the philanthropy of that scheme of settlement, it was to help the Company to stand up against the North West Company by providing cheap provisions for the posts and a ready supply of cheap labour in the country. Not less important, it was to make good the Company's claim to the soil under the Charter.

The North West Company claimed to be the rightful successors to La Vérendrye and the early French traders who had opened up the land. The first of Selkirk's settlers, seventy in all, sailed from Stornoway, Scotland, on July 26th, 1811, and after wintering at York Factory reached the Red River Valley near the site of Winnipeg, a heart-breaking overland journey of 730 miles in fifty-five days. Other parties followed in 1813, 1814 and 1815. Lord Selkirk had established an agricultural community in the Red River Valley directly across the Nor'wester's route to the west. By this time the Northwesters' ambitions had carried them beyond the limitations of the law, and in 1816 North West Company half-breeds massacred twenty-two men, including Robert Semple, the Company's local governor, at Seven Oaks, just north of Winnipeg. The massacre shattered the colonizing project. Selkirk fought an inconclusive legal

battle, and died, a disappointed man, in 1820. Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the greatest of the Nor'westers, died in the same year.

The colony of the Red River which had been founded by Lord Selkirk in 1812 was taken over by the Company in 1836. Its form of Government was in keeping with the Company's Charter—a governor and a council appointed by the Governor and Committee in London. Though its form of government was thus autocratic, Assiniboia, as the colony was called, was really a democratic community. The councillors were nominated by the local Governor to the Committee in London and were chosen from among the leading men in the several districts. French and English sat side by side in the Council and either language could be used. The Roman Catholic and the Anglican bishops were of the Council. Half-breeds represented the half-breed districts. As a matter of practice, laws were only passed if the Council was unanimous. They thus represented the consensus of opinion in the colony. The law courts were equally primitive. The petty courts were conducted in the most informal manner and were more like arbitration boards seeking for just decisions. The Quarterly Court—the Court of Appeal—was technically the whole Council, but usually only four or five appeared on the bench. The evidence approximated to the form of taking affidavits. As there were no lawyers in the community, save Adam Thom the Recorder of the court, ordinarily the bench conducted the cross-examination. The jury, which might be as heterogeneous in composition as the Council itself, gave the decision. The costs of the court and lawsuits were in harmony with the primitive character of the colony. So was the financial system. The administration was supported by licenses for the sale of intoxicants and by a tariff of four per cent. The Company was by far the largest importer of goods and paid custom duties in proportion.

## XII. Union of H.B.C. and North West Company.

The North West Company, as a commercial entity, was about to leave the stage. Fort William, its huge palisaded fort at the head of Lake Superior, with its vast, portrait-lined dining-hall, was to decay. The Beaver Club at Montreal, that roystering group of lords of the north, was to disappear in a few years. No longer would a thousand voyageurs set out in canoes and batteaux to challenge the Adventurers of England. These men who with extravagant courage had thrust the fur trade not only across the wilderness of North America but out across the Pacific to China, were to bring fresh vigour into the Hudson's Bay Company.

The union of the two companies was accomplished by a deed of co-partnership.

When the time came for the North West Company partners to renew the agreement of partnership, a number of the wintering partners saw an escape from the wasteful competition and a means of securing the Hudson Bay route, in an arrangement with the Hudson's Bay Company. Their action brought about the union of 1821. By it the trade enjoyed the use of the route through Hudson Strait and the Company's title to the soil was recognized by all parties. Thus the Company entered upon a great period of its history, which was to continue till the transfer of Rupert's Land to the Dominion of Canada.

The Company's Charter gave them the monopoly of the trade of Rupert's Land, the region of the rivers flowing into Hudson Bay. Beyond were the valleys of the rivers falling into the Arctic Ocean and beyond the Rockies was the Pacific slope. In 1821 Parliament passed an Act arranging for the monopoly of these regions, described as the North West Territories, to be given to any company undertaking to fulfil certain conditions. The license conveying the monopoly was given to the united Company, subject to the Treaty with America of 1818, which gave Americans





Sioux Indian Chief

equal rights of trade in the country west of the Rockies. The Company now had control of a truly continental domain\* for nearly half a century. The Company ruled over the many savage peoples in the vast area from the boundary of Labrador to the Pacific and from the lower reaches of the Mackenzie River to the American passes over the Rockies practically in unbroken peace, while from time to time wars almost of extermination broke out south of the border. It is on record that one traveller to the North West at this period, though warned that the Sioux were on the war-path, continued on his course with no other protection than the Union Jack, which was also the Company's flag, that the warriors rode up to him but fraternized with him as soon as they saw the flag.

Under the old name, the flag, and the royal powers of the Charter, the Hudson's Bay Company went forward to new achievements. It was 1821, the year Napoleon died at St. Helena, and Sir Walter Scott published Kenilworth; King George IV was trying to divorce his Queen, and peace had come to Europe and peace to the fur trade.

The empire over which the Company held administrative as well as trading powers included all modern Canada except the Great Lakes basin and the maritime provinces. With many blank sections on the fringes of their maps, the Company divided British North America into four great departments:

The Northern Department of Rupert's Land, embracing the area between the United States boundary to the south, the unknown Arctic on the north, Hudson Bay on the east, and the Rocky Mountains on the west.

<sup>\*</sup>This is exclusive of the King's Posts extending down the St. Lawrence to beyond Anticosti, leased in 1831, and the posts opened thereafter on the coast of Labrador. The King's Posts originally belonged to the King of France, but on the conquest of Canada in 1760 they passed into the possession of the British Crown. The North West Company acquired the lease from 1802 until 1822—the year after their union with the Hudson's Bay Company. The Hudson's Bay Company held the lease from 1831 until 1859. They continued, however, to occupy posts which they had themselves established.

2. The Southern Department, extending from James Bay southward to the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada and east to include East Main, the eastern coast of Hudson Bay.

3. The Montreal Department, covering the Company's business in Upper and Lower Canada, the King's

Posts and, later, Labrador.

4. The Columbia Department covering the valley of the Columbia River, and, after 1825, the Canadian Pacific slope called New Caledonia.

The supreme executive control was in London with the Governor, Deputy Governor and Committee, representing the shareholders or proprietors as they are still called. In the first years of the union there were in Canada two local governors for the Northern and Southern Departments respectively. After 1826 the combined offices were held by George Simpson until 1839 when he was appointed

Governor-in-chief of Rupert's Land.

Internally, the changes resulting from the union were extensive. The Hudson's Bay Company adopted the strongest features of the structure of their late rival. The officers, chief factors and chief traders became partners to the extent of forty per cent. of the shares, while apprentice clerks could look forward to participation in profits upon promotion to the ranks of the "commissioned gentlemen." The forty per cent. of shares was divided into eighty-five portions, twenty-five chief factors received fifty shares, twenty-eight chief traders received twenty-eight shares and seven were set aside as a retirement fund for commissioned officers.

XIII. Sir George Simpson.

Under Sir George Simpson's rule as Governor-in-chief, the Council of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land became the dominant body of the whole structure in Canada. It established the regulations for the fur trade, examined the



Sir George Simpson



Sir George Simpson in Canoe

results of each "outfit's" trading, determined furloughs, applied discipline and recommended promotions and retirements to the Board in London. To the council rooms of Norway House, York Factory or Fort Garry, the officers of the Company came each year from the wilderness to meet, and, after dining sumptuously, to settle the affairs of half a continent. It was a structure unique in commercial history, combining trading rights with a sovereignty under the British Crown. From the Governor to the voyageurs and labourers it was to be imbued with a loyalty only comparable to that of the army or navy. Economists as well as historians have never ceased to find in the story of the Hudson's Bay Company between 1821 and 1869 a field of absorbing interest.

The most casual reader into Company history must be conscious of the power and efficiency of Sir George Simpson as an administrator during the forty years following the union. In him, a clear orderly mind and a driving ambition were sustained by a physical vitality which carried him buoyantly through life. Apart from all that has been written by those who knew him and worked under him, these qualities of efficiency, ambition, and vitality are revealed in his remarkable journals and letters.

In 1820, while he was yet under thirty-five, George Simpson was sent from a London office to the very frontiers of the fur trade, the Athabasca country where the North West-Hudson's Bay war for pelts was being conducted with great violence. The Nor'westers had been first in the territory and the entry of the men from the Bay posts was being strenuously opposed. The little Scot with the bland manner and the iron will had led the Company's forces with such cool vigour during that winter that on the union he was selected to command the important Northern Department of Rupert's Land. Within five years he held commissions as Governor of the Northern and Southern

Departments, ruling over all the giants of the fur trade. His quick success as a trader in the Athabasca together with a freedom from the deep prejudices of the older men must have greatly influenced his appointment.

Simpson's keen sense of the dramatic and his understanding of the Indians have given a patch of colour to the pages of Canadian history. Descriptions of his arrival at the forts, in his silk hat, with his picked crew of red-shirted Iroquois paddlers and a Highland Piper, are sprinkled throughout the writing of the period and in many histories of the fur trade. The rigid discipline which he imposed upon the fur trade made enemies for him, but his mastery of every detail of the Company's affairs and the sweep of his constructive imagination made him the greatest of all fur traders.

Order emerged from confusion in the Company's affairs, luxuries were struck out of the officers' requisitions, business-like accounts were required, and yet as the "little emperor" moved tirelessly by canoe and saddle across the continent, he found time to include in his flow of correspondence pages of that personal news and chitchat which is the flavour of life to men in lonely places.

Simpson's first task was reorganization. A superfluous body of half-breeds was withdrawn from the forts and settled on the east bank of the Red River, the Company providing the land and a sum of money for their homes. Superfluous officers well on in years were retired, some returning to Britain or to Eastern Canada, but a number bringing their families with them to swell the population of the Red River Settlement, including Alexander Ross, Donald Gunn, James Bird. Where two trading posts competed one was closed. In the Athabasca Region the North West Company's posts were retained, on the Saskatchewan the Hudson's Bay Company's; thus Fort Augustus disappeared and Edmonton House remained.

Posts ceased to be incessantly removed, but occupied permanent points of vantage in the transportation system; thus Edmonton became the point of departure for Lesser Slave Lake and the Columbia, pack horses being employed to take the goods to a new post, Fort Assiniboine on the Athabasca River. Fort Carlton sent the pemmican for the northern brigades overland to Green Lake for Ile-à-la-Crosse. Norway House, on Little Playgreen Lake, became the depot of supplies in the interior.

In 1841, Simpson, at the age of about 50, was knighted by Her Majesty Queen Victoria. A little later, he started on a trip around the world which took him overland across Canada, Asiatic Russia and Europe.

For political and Company reasons Simpson gave encouragement to exploration, and from the journals of men who were absent for years filling in the gaps on Canada's map, we learn of him writing letters of friendly encouragement and holding out promises of rewards.

### XIV. Further Company Exploration.

A notable feature was the policy of exploration with a view to the expansion of the trade. From 1823 to 1825 John McLeod was kept exploring the valley of the Liard and into the Rockies. In 1824-25 Samuel Black explored the Finlay Branch of the Peace River far into the mountain mass. In 1840 Robert Campbell was sent up the north branch of the Liard River. He discovered Lake Frances, so called after Lady Simpson, where a post was established. Descending the western slope of the Rockies, Campbell came on a wide river which he called Pelly after the Governor of the Company, but which, however, proved to be the Yukon. In 1843 he descended his Pelly River to the Lewes where Fort Selkirk was established five years later (1848). Into these years of strenuous life among hostile Indians Campbell crowded astounding adventures. In 1847 Alexander Hunter Murray was sent westward from

Fort Macpherson on the Peel River which flows into the delta of the Mackenzie. He passed down the Porcupine to the Yukon and built Fort Yukon at the confluence. A man of scientific interests and artistic ability, his journals are adorned with drawings. In 1851 Campbell descended the Pelly (Yukon) to Fort Yukon and completed the round of discovery.

Similar explorations were being carried out on the East Main. William Hendry's journey in 1828 from Richmond Gulf across the Main to the Koksoak River which flows into Ungava Bay issued in the opening of Fort Chimo (1830). Journeys were made by Erland Erlandson in 1834-35 through the inhospitable wilds between Ungava Bay and Hamilton Inlet, where the Company was beginning its Labrador trade.

Dour John McLean, whose travels east and west make one of the most absorbing narratives of the fur trade, wrote a book about his twenty-five years of service. He retired, embittered by a feud with Sir George Simpson, but his heroic travelling in 1838 through the arctic wilds between Ungava Bay and Hamilton Inlet in Labrador give him a secure place in northern chronicles.

The Company had been actively associated as the supplier of goods, provisions and servants, with the arctic explorations of Captain John Franklin in 1819-22 and 1825-27, and of Captain Back in 1833-35. When the naval officers abandoned their task of delineating the north shore of the continent, the Company carried it on to completion. In 1837 Peter Warren Dease and Thomas Simpson explored the gap of the coast of Alaska between "Boat Extreme" where Franklin had turned and Point Barrow, the limit of Captain Parry's simultaneous exploration. The name of Colvile River, Alaska, was given in honour of Andrew Colvile, then a conspicuous member of the committee.

In 1838 Dease and Simpson passed from winter quarters on Great Bear Lake to the Coppermine River and from its mouth along the coast surveyed by Franklin. They travelled for ten days on foot beyond Franklin's extreme limit, Turnagain Point. Dease Strait of our maps commemorates their presence. In 1839 they explored from the point at which they had turned to Ogle Point, the western promontory of the estuary of Backs River, the extreme limit of Back's exploration, and beyond to a point south of Rae Strait where they built a cairn. Geographical names in honour of the Company's servants mark their course—Dease Point, Campbell and Ogden Bays and Simpson Strait.

In 1846 the Company's exploration proceeded westward. Dr. John Rae from Repulse Bay crossed the isthmus that bears his name to Committee Bay and explored its west coast where Pelly Bay was named after Sir J. H. Pelly, Governor of the Company. After wintering in Repulse Bay he returned and surveyed the east coast of Committee Bay. In 1848 Rae was with Sir John Richardson on his expedition for the relief of Franklin. In 1851 at the Company's order he returned to the quest, crossed from near the mouth of the Coppermine River to Wollaston, Victoria Island, and traced its southern coast from Cape Baring to Victoria Strait, thus delineating the coast opposite to that covered by Dease and Simpson. Rae was sent to continue the exploration from the east. From Repulse Bay he penetrated to the west coast of Boothia by the valley of the Murchison River. From the mouth of the river Rae went westward till he came to Simpson's cairn. His further exploration was to the north and is marked by the names Shepherd Bay and Cape Colvile, so called after the Deputy Governor and the Governor of that time. As the coast north and east of this had been defined by naval expeditions, these explorations

of the Company completed the delineation of the northern shore of the continent.

Rae had been a physician in the Company's service but became an active fur trader and later chief factor. He is celebrated in the history of Arctic exploration for his ability to travel fast and live off the land. It was he who brought from the Arctic the first relics of Sir John Franklin's illfavoured expedition.

XV. The Company on the Pacific Coast and in the Oregon.

The Northern Council supervised the trade of the Pacific slope. The North West Company had commenced its trans-Rocky Mountain venture by building posts on McLeod Lake and Stuart Lake, the latter being named after John Stuart.\* Fort St. James still stands on Stuart Lake, the oldest permanent settlement in British Columbia.

The search for a practicable waterway to the sea continued and in 1808 Simon Fraser descended the river that bears his name to its tidal waters, but it was too turbulent to be of use. From 1808 to 1811 David Thompson was conducting the advance westward down the valley of the Columbia and building posts in the present States of Washington, Idaho and Montana. But the Americans were also acquiring rights in the region. Their ships had been early in the maritime trade and Captain Gray had discovered the mouth of the Columbia. Then too John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company had established Astoria within the mouth of the river, and other posts at its confluence with the Okanagan and as far north as Kamloops. The North West Company bought out the Astor Company, but both countries claimed the sovereignty of the land. An agreement was arranged in 1818 by which each nation recognized for ten years the other's right to trade. (It was renewed in 1827 and continued in force until the Oregon Treaty of 1846.)

\* John Stuart, who was the uncle of the first Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, was in charge of the district of New Caledonia from 1809 to 1824.





Norway House Vir Trade Post (by courtesy of the Dept. of National Defence, Ottana)

When Governor Simpson visited the Columbia Department in 1824 he knew that the British Government was ready to effect a compromise on the question of sovereignty and to make the River Columbia the boundary between the two countries. The Company had continued the transportation arrangements of the Northwesters. A ship was sent yearly round Cape Horn to Fort George, Astoria that was. In anticipation of the surrender of the south bank of the Columbia on which that post stood, Fort Vancouver was built some eighty miles from the sea. From this post the annual express crossed the continent to Norway House and York Factory. To strengthen the British claim to the north bank as well as in the interests of the trade, a fine farm and orchard were established by the picturesque Dr. McLoughlin, the head of the Department.

Dr. John McLoughlin, known to American history as the "Father of Oregon," and to the fur trade as "the big doctor," ruled the Columbia district (on the Pacific coast) under Simpson, with wide powers. A giant of a man with a kindly heart, his hospitality to the "covered waggon" settlers from the central United States has given him a revered name in the story of the North Pacific States of America. He severed his connection with the Company and became an American citizen when his vast domain became part of the Republic. His later life was unhappy, and he died in 1857, embittered against his adopted country.

As a fur trader he had exercised wisely the baronial power which came to the truly big men of his period.

James Douglas, a young man whom McLoughlin had chosen to be his assistant, lived to carry on in "the big doctor's" steps. It was he who established Victoria, named after the girl Queen in 1843, and who later combined the offices of chief factor and colonial governor. A thorough, painstaking man, he guided with firmness and justice the affairs of his colony from its fur trade birth until the

Confederation of Canada. He later became Governor of the Crown Colony of Vancouver Island and of British Columbia. He died in 1877 a Knight Commander of the Bath (1863) and honoured by his countrymen.

In 1839 a subsidiary Company, the Puget's Sound Agricultural Society, was formed for farming operations on Puget Sound. Both there and at Fort Vancouver large herds of cattle and flocks of sheep were reared.

There was now nothing to prevent the Hudson's Bay Company from absorbing the trade of the Pacific slope. Its schooner and later the s.s. Beaver plying up and down the coast and the posts established at vantage points for the marine fur trade, and finally, the contract with the Russian American Fur Company, who bought all their supplies from the Hudson's Bay Company, left no trade for the Americans and their ships disappeared from those waters. Similarly, the American fur traders disappeared from the interior. The Company's trapping cavalcades, called, from the area in which they were first employed, the Snake Expeditions, left no business for outsiders. These expeditions at one time and another covered the wide area from the sources of the Missouri to San Francisco Bay. The expedition of Alexander Ross in 1823-24 reached the head waters of the Missouri. Peter Skene Ogden in 1825-26 was on the upper waters of the Snake or Lewes River in southern Idaho; in 1826-27 he was in the valley of the Klamath in Northern California; in 1827-28 he was in Utah east of Great Salt Lake, where the name Ogden City recalls his presence; in 1828-29 he was again in California. For two years John Work, his successor, was on ground already covered, but in 1832-33 he penetrated down the valley of the Sacramento to the Spanish mission at San Pablo Bay.

But there are other ways of holding a country than by trade. Patriotic Methodist missionaries were moved by

the Spirit to evangelize the Indians of the Oregon. Like many others they found nomad Indians a very difficult sphere of labour. They turned their attention to farming and began to broadcast the praises of the Oregon country to a land-hungry continent. A mass movement of Americans followed and finally a Provisional Government was formed. It was evident that the southern bank of the Columbia was to be American. The cry of the Democratic Party in the elections of 1844 "fifty-four, forty or fight"i.e., the present southern boundary of Alaska or fight-put its candidate, James Polk, into office as President. Britain was constrained to agree to a boundary at the forty-ninth parallel of latitude. Ultimately the Hudson's Bay Company and the Puget's Sound Agricultural Society received compensation for their common law rights in the fields and forests exploited by them south of the International Boundary.

#### XVI. Vancouver Island.

After the Oregon crisis the British Government had fears that there might be a rush of Americans into Vancouver Island and that another Provisional Government might be formed there, and both the British and American Governments be faced with a very difficult situation. It was therefore decided to form a British colony on the island. The task of founding this colony was assigned to the Hudson's Bay Company by a Grant dated 13th January, 1849. The Company was made the trustee of the natural resources of the island to be used in forming the settlement. It was allowed a profit of ten per cent. The very objective -a colony predominantly British-made it difficult to people an island so far from Britain and reached only by the unpleasant voyage round Cape Horn. The Company offered the land on terms which could be attractive to none but Englishmen desiring to be gentleman farmers. The Puget's Sound Agricultural Society took up land and

introduced labourers, but progress was necessarily very slow. It was arrested by the gold rush to California. In 1859, the British Government withdrew the Grant and Vancouver Island became a Crown Colony. The Hudson's Bay Company had established Fort Victoria in 1843 to be headquarters for its shipping. The Bay of Camosack was chosen by James Douglas, Chief Factor at Fort Vancouver on the Columbia.

XVII. Parliamentary Committee, 1857.

So long as the only means of disposing of furs was through the Company's post, Fort Garry, the monopoly was no burden to the community, but when American settlement reached St. Paul and the half-breeds could take their furs to market there, difficulties began. To break the monopoly, charges of maladministration were laid against the Company before the British Government. The Colonial Minister after enquiry pronounced these unfounded, but the continued agitation and the difficulties of the Colony of Vancouver Island led to the enquiry by a Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1857. The Canadian Government put in a plea that the fertile land of the west should be laid open for settlement.

As a result of the enquiry Vancouver Island was made a Crown Colony, the license securing to the Company the monopoly of the North West Territories was allowed to lapse, and the government and trade of Rupert's Land were left with the Company, subject to the proviso that when Canada settled a portion of the fertile belt and gave it transportation, it should be transferred to her. However, this proved too great a task for young Canada and, moreover, Quebec was averse to an expansion which could give Upper Canada a preponderating influence in the colony. It was only when the Confederation was formed that the opposition of Quebec disappeared and Canada appeared strong enough financially to provide transportation facilities for the West.

In 1857 when the Company was under investigation by a committee of the British House of Commons, Sir George Simpson was one of the principal witnesses. It was one of the rare occasions on which the Company's affairs became public affairs, and historians have found in the evidence of that enquiry material of the first importance to Western history. It was a distinguished committee, including among the members William Ewart Gladstone, Lord Stanley and Lord John Russell. From February to June the Company was on trial before the Committee. Celebrated explorers and travellers, including John Ross, Dr. Rae, Col. Lefroy, Sir John Richardson, Bishop Anderson, Col. Caldwell and Dr. King, were witnesses who contributed to the 400 pages of printed evidence. The main attack was on the ground of the misuse of monopoly power and the Company's alleged opposition to settlement. As a company primarily interested in fur-trading, the Adventurers were not eager to promote settlement, and the Company's experimental farming in the Red River valley had shown many of the hazards of agriculture in the west in those days. The evidence given for and against the settlement of the west by the best authorities of that time makes interesting reading to-day.

The Committee's report, which was adopted by parliament, found that Canada's wish to assume the territory was reasonable; that the Red River and Saskatchewan districts were most suitable and available for settlement; that arrangements should be made for their cession to Canada; and that where settlement was impracticable the Hudson's Bay Company should remain in control. The end of the monopoly was in sight. Sir George Simpson died at Montreal in 1860, but the Company carried on as rulers of the west under the Crown until 1869.

XVIII. Commissioned Officers.

Simpson's work was not single-handed. Without men of the stoutest qualities to support him his gigantic visions would have remained but dreams. Twenty-five chief factors and twenty-nine chief traders were his fur trade barons, the heirs to the Royal Charter's description of "true and absolute Lordes and Proprietors." They were trusted men with executive capacity and the power to command men. Had they been men lacking a high sense of duty the story of the Canadian west would be different. The intelligence and strength of character of these commissioned officers of the Company during the years of sovereignty made it possible after 1869 for the Dominion of Canada to open the west to settlement without the horror of Indian wars. These men, though many of them may not have appreciated it, were more than fur traders; they were the builders of a nation. Many of them are practically unknown to history because the records of their achievements are in unpublished letters and journals. A few of them were conscious of the march of events and their writings (those were days of full beards and good hand-writing) sometimes ring with the modest prophecy of greater days to come for the North West.

## XIX. Transfer of Rupert's Land to the Crown.

To examine the history of the Hudson's Bay Company in the nineteenth century is to appreciate the slow-moving justice of the British Parliament in the settlement of the controversy which arose between the Company and the Canadian Government. We have seen how the Parliamentary Committee of 1857 partially recognized Canada's territorial claims. Ten years passed, and the Company still ruled the west, though Canada's case became more insistently pressed until by 1867, when Confederation became a political reality, it must have been clear to everyone that the end of the Company's administration of Rupert's Land was in sight.

The British North America Act of 1867 (Clause 146) made provision for the admission of Rupert's Land (the

Company's territory) and the North West Territories (Crown domain) into the Confederation. The Rupert's Land Act of 1868 defined the procedure. The surrender was to be on terms and the country revert to the Crown and then be transferred to Canada. Negotiations between the Company and Canada with the Colonial Minister as go-between resulted in an agreement the principal features of which were the payment by Canada of £300,000 by way of compensation and one-twentieth part of the land in any township settled within the fertile belt.

By the Deed of Surrender of 1869 the Company did not give up its Royal Charter but only certain of the trading privileges. The final transfer of lands to the Company, under the terms of the deed, was not completed until 1925 or fifty-six years after the date of surrender, under which the Company was allowed every privilege of a private trading corporation without hindrance or exceptional

taxation.

It was the end of an old chapter and the opening of a new. The Company relinquished the administration of the Country, leaving a record of achievement which facilitated the task of the new government. Peace had been maintained in the wilderness, trading had been conducted without violence, principles of justice had been established, and the exploration successfully accomplished has continued to be of the utmost service even in modern times. But the time for settlement had come. Cities were to rise about the stockades, and ploughs were to turn long furrows where the buffalo had ranged.

# XX. Following the Deed of Surrender.

The Charter of 1670 had served its purpose for two hundred years, but it had now outlived its time.

In 1863 the International Financial Society Limited had bought enough stock to control and reorganize the Com-

pany; the stock which hitherto could only be transferred with the consent of the Governor and Committee had been converted into shares sold in the open market. In 1884 it was felt advisable to petition for a second\* supplemental charter to regularize this and other changes effected at that time. This and subsequent supplemental charters, like the Charter granted by Charles II, were issued by Royal Prerogative. The "corporal oath" was abolished; the presence of the Governor or Deputy Governor at certain meetings was made no longer obligatory; proprietors (shareholders) were given the right to vote by proxy; instead of all the directors being elected at the Annual General Court (annual meeting of shareholders), but onethird were to be elected. A third supplemental charter, granted in 1892, inaugurated a system of preferred and deferred shares, and also provided for the formation of a reserve fund from the sales of the lands. supplemental charter consolidating and amending its predecessors and giving the Company new powers in the way of issuing shares and borrowing on its debenture stock and bonds was granted in 1912. In 1920 a fifth supplemental charter assented to by His Majesty King George V, declared the right of the Company to carry on trade and commerce and to establish agencies in all parts of the world. It no more than reflected the actual business being carried on, as is manifest from the Company's activities during the War.

The Red River Rebellion of 1869-70 is not of outstanding importance in the Company's history, yet it affected political events in Western Canada. It was a fantastic episode of armed men, displays of force, proclamations—and very little shooting.

<sup>\*</sup> The Company had been granted a supplemental Charter in 1675 by Charles II giving the Company, inter alia rights to the whole trade and commerce of Busse Island, which was supposed to be situate between 57° and 59° North Latitude. Busse Island, which proved to be mythical, was so named because it was reported to have been discovered by the Frobisher Expedition in 1578 by a buss (small ship) named *Emmanuel*.



Donald A. Smith

First Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal—Twenty-Sixth Governor

The population in the Valley of the Red River included many of the restless drifters known to every frontier community. Most of these lived in the muddy village of Winnipeg at the gates of Fort Garry. The population also included several thousand Metis, or half-breeds, who held the view that as a racial group in the West they possessed rights which the new government of Canada were not likely to recognize.

The Company's officers in Canada, knowing that the surrender of the old powers was at hand, probably allowed the local government of Assiniboia, as the district was called, to grow lax. The local governor of Fort Garry, Chief Factor Mactavish, was dying and unable to give any firm leadership in a crisis.

Armed half-breeds under Louis Riel, seized Fort Garry and refused to permit the newly appointed Lieutenant Governor from Canada to cross the international boundary (he had come, complete with staff, from Ottawa via St. Paul to Pembina). While this representative of the Crown wintered on the boundary, Riel at Fort Garry issued manifestoes and made endless speeches to his followers.

#### XXI. Donald A. Smith.

A Company man, Donald A. Smith, with a great record as a fur trader on the Labrador appeared in the middle of the winter as a special commissioner from the Canadian Government at Ottawa. The winter dragged on and the summer of 1870 found Riel holding Fort Garry and the Government still unable to take official possession. It was August before a relief expedition of twelve hundred men (British regulars and Canadian militia) under Colonel Garnet Wolseley reached Fort Garry. The rebels vanished and the Dominion of Canada was able to take over Rupert's Land.

It was in the subsequent arbitration with the half-breeds that Donald Smith was first seen as a public character.

His remarkable career links the old fur trade with modern times. Through a relative in the Company he entered the service as an apprentice at Lachine in 1838, and shortly afterwards was despatched to a post on the lower St. Lawrence. For nearly thirty years he was a fur trader, mostly on the Labrador, and subsequently he rose to become Governor of the Company, Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal, President of the Bank of Montreal, Chancellor of McGill University, and Canadian High Commissioner to Great Britain. For twenty-five years he continued as Governor of the Company, and he lived to preside at the General Court, as the annual meeting is still called, in 1913, at the advanced age of ninety-three. He died in January, 1914.

## XXII. Progress with advance of Civilization.

In the century before the Deed of Surrender of 1869, the west had become more of a "known quantity." Trails and rivers were the transportation routes: Indian trappers were the customers. Only nature itself, with the vagaries of weather and animal life, could not be forecast. During the thirty years following the Deed of Surrender, railways and telegraphs crossed the prairie and the Rocky Mountains, and more than two million people settled west of the Great Lakes. Settlers, merchants, speculators and vagrants poured into this land which was so old to the fur trade but so new otherwise.

Here truly was to be a testing of the qualities of the old Company. Would it survive the effect of these profound changes, or would it withdraw to the forests of the north to live on fur trading and brooding upon departed glories? It was not the first time the Company's existence had been threatened but never before had such drastic changes been required in the Company's organization if it was to have a place in the new West. The transition from the state of being "absolute Lordes" with privileges of exclusive trade

to that of merchants and traders in a newly opened pioneer land, exposed to every form of competition, in settlements where the population was migratory and even government uncertain, was a challenge to the two-century old Company. How the Hudson's Bay Company met these conditions is a chapter in the history of Canadian commerce yet to be adequately recorded.

The fur trade continued as the senior of several departments in the Company. A land department was created to administer the seven million acres of land which had been acquired under the Deed of Surrender. A wholesale department became a new distributing unit. A chain of great retail stores grew up to play an important part in the daily lives of people in the Canadian West.

The change which came over life in Western Canada during the fifty years following the Deed of Surrender can be told in the rise of one of its cities. Edmonton is typical. At the time of the Surrender it was the dominant post of the valley of the Saskatchewan River. White men had traded furs there for three-quarters of a century. The fort itself was high on the left bank of the Saskatchewan River, hexagonal in shape, with bastions on the corners. Within the white palisades lived one hundred and twenty persons under the command of a chief factor. It was a great supply depot, and the country was rich with buffalo. Celebrated travellers of that time, who crossed the plains and wrote their books, never failed to mention Fort Edmonton's hospitality. The central hall, where the native chiefs were received and guests entertained on a lavish scale, was decorated in barbaric designs and colours, but in the living quarters families grew up with more of the amenities of life than were known for thousands of miles in any direction. A distinguished line of Company officers held this important post, including James Bird, John Rowand, and Richard Hardisty. These were men of "the great lone land" who kept the peace, ruled firmly, and rendered absolute loyalty to the Company.

In 1871, two years after the Surrender, "the great house" was built. This two-storeyed, balconied building with more glass windows than usual, was a wonder to the Indians, and a notable landmark in history, being the first building to be erected outside the stockade. Later it became the first golf club house of the city of Edmonton.

In 1874, the mounted men in scarlet tunics came to Edmonton and took over the policing of the West.

By 1879 settlement had begun to take form outside the palisade of the fort.

A year later the first of the frenzied land booms which seemed to be almost a necessary growing pain of prairie towns swept the little community. In 1883 there were forty children in the Edmonton school.

It was 1890 when the Hudson's Bay Company built a new store outside the fort, to supply general merchandise to the growing town, and a year later the first railroad reached the city from the south.

The gold rush to the Klondike gave Edmonton fresh expansion. Prospectors outfitted there, and many disillusioned gold seekers returned to Edmonton to make their homes in the town—now three thousand souls.

Edmonton emerged as an incorporated city in 1904, and plunged into a second great land boom in 1905. It was also in 1905 that the Hudson's Bay Company built a larger store in the business district. Chief Factor Hardisty's "great house" was destroyed by fire in 1906.

Agriculture in the district prospered and at the outbreak of the Great War the population was 7,500. The buildings of the Provincial Parliament of Alberta were erected in 1915, and the log buildings of Fort Edmonton were removed to provide an expanse of landscaped lawns.

To-day this Edmonton of 79,000 people is a mature city, the capital of a great province, the seat of a distinguished university, the gateway to the Peace River and to all the mineral and fur wealth of the Mackenzie-Athabasca country. One of the chain of department stores owned by the Hudson's Bay Company in Western Canada serves this community. It is the headquarters of the Mackenzie-Athabasca fur trade district, and a supply depot is maintained which provides all kinds of merchandise for trappers and miners as far north as the Arctic Ocean.

The growth of Edmonton has been described herein because its story is so characteristic of the dramatic rise from trading post to city within the memory of living men, which has marked most western centres of population.

Winnipeg also is typical of this transition. When the Company surrendered its sovereignty under the Deed of Surrender, 1869, trading was carried on within the stone walls of Fort Garry, and the population of Winnipeg was three hundred. In 1881 a store was built on Main Street to serve the growing community and the Fort was demolished to make way for city streets. In 1926 the Hudson's Bay Company's great retail store—one of the finest in Canada—rose to mark the Company's confidence in the future and to serve a population of a quarter of a million. Hudson's Bay House, within a stone's throw of Fort Garry Gate, is to-day the Canadian head office of the Company and its departments.

Brandon, Portage la Prairie, Prince Albert, the Pas, Kamloops, and Victoria, are a few of the cities which have grown similarly from the forts of the fur trade.

The Company kept pace with the times. It was not a spectacular race with increasing prosperity at every turn, for the new era involved ventures which were hazardous and expensive, but throughout those years of Canada's rapid development preceding the Great War when men were lulled into visions of unending prosperity, the conservative policy of the Company stood it in good stead.

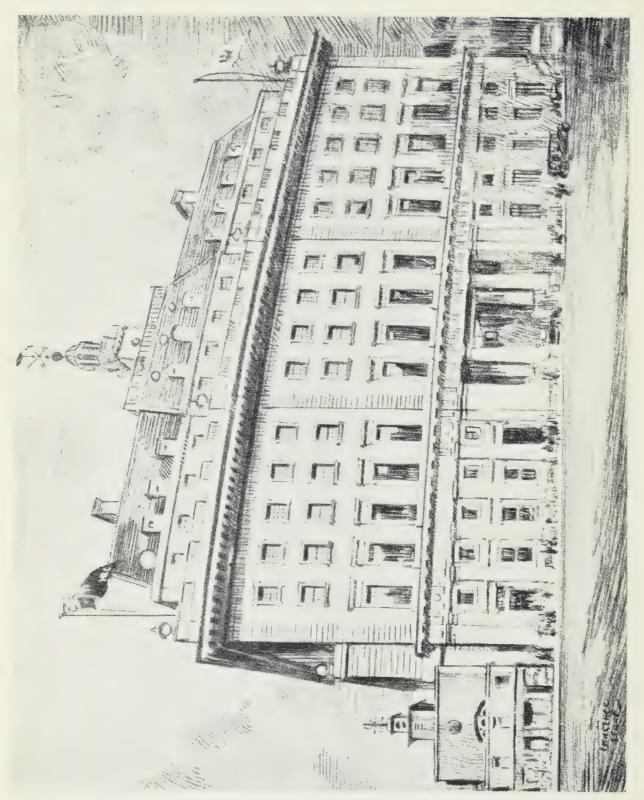
XXIII. The Company To-day.

The making of history is endless and the Great Company still marches on. To tell the story of the Company's existence up to the beginning of the twentieth century is not enough, and anyone who has found interest in these pages will want to learn something of the present structure of this corporation which has survived the centuries of "trading into Hudson's Bay." What is the destiny of this Company labelled "adventurers"? What has become of the heritage of Hearne, Kelsey, Rae, McLoughlin, Simpson and the other stalwarts? "Proprietors" of a great lone land they may have been, but what of the Company in our own time?

With the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, the Company found itself called upon to engage in activities greater than at any time during its history. Appointed purchasing agent for the French Government, it also undertook the organization of steamship services for the transport of goods to France. During the years 1915 to 1919, it handled some 13,000,000 tons of supplies, and operated over a million tons of shipping. How far-flung its activities were may perhaps best be realized by a recital of a few of the types of cargoes. Breadstuffs were brought from Algeria, Argentine, Australia, Canada, India, Indo-China, Russia and the United States. Sugar was shipped from Cuba, Java, Martinique, Mauritius, Reunion and from American and Canadian ports. Timber and wood-pulp were conveyed from Canada, the White Sea, and the Baltic; coal from England, Canada, and the United States; groundnuts, palm-kernels and other produce from West Africa and Morocco.

The Hudson's Bay Company to-day still carries its full legal title as set out in the original Charter, "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay." The Company continues to conduct its





business under a Royal Charter and is therefore exempt from the provisions of the Companies Act of Great Britain.

A Governor, Deputy Governor and Committee (the Board of Directors) have directed Company affairs in unbroken continuity since the incorporation. To-day this executive group—limited to nine members—is elected by the Proprietors at the Annual General Court when one-third of their number come up for retirement. The Board meets regularly in Hudson's Bay House, London, where are hung portraits of Prince Rupert, Sir George Simpson, Sir John Pelly and others, and determine matters of policy and principle.

Adjoining Hudson's Bay House is the church of St. Ethelburga the Virgin within Bishopsgate, one of the few surviving churches which escaped the ravages of the Great Fire of London in 1666. The present building, so far as can be ascertained, dates from between A.D. 1400 and A.D. 1450, and it was here that Henry Hudson received communion on April 19th, 1607, shortly before sailing on his first Voyage of Discovery.

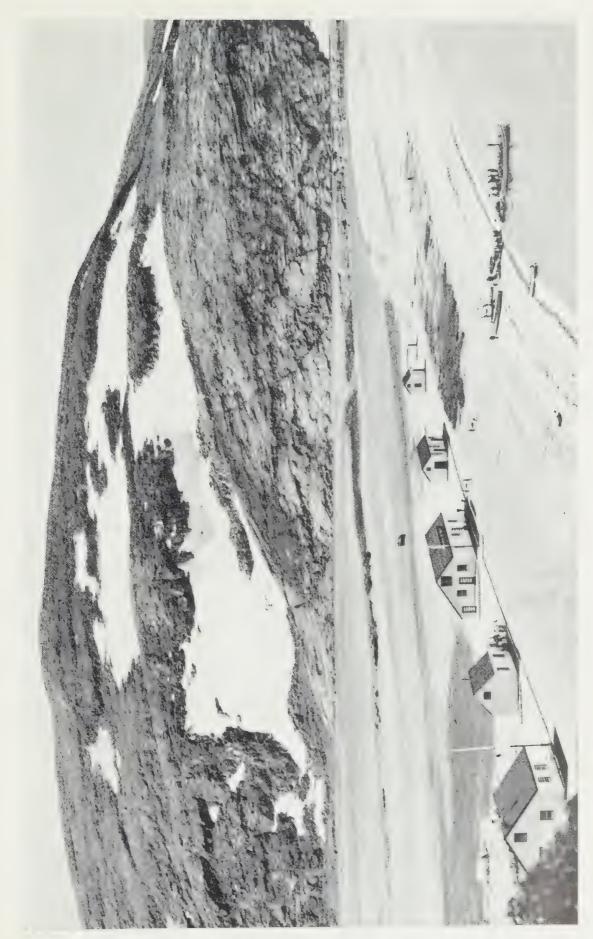
Since 1931, the Company's affairs in Canada have been under the administration of a Canadian Committee. Prior to that date this Committee served in an advisory capacity. The Canadian Committee is responsible to the Governor, Deputy Governor and Committee; it meets weekly in Hudson's Bay House, Winnipeg, where it maintains its offices as a central organization in Canada. Hudson's Bay House, Winnipeg, is also the headquarters of the four Canadian departments of the Company which will be described briefly in order of their seniority.

### XXIV. The Fur Trade.

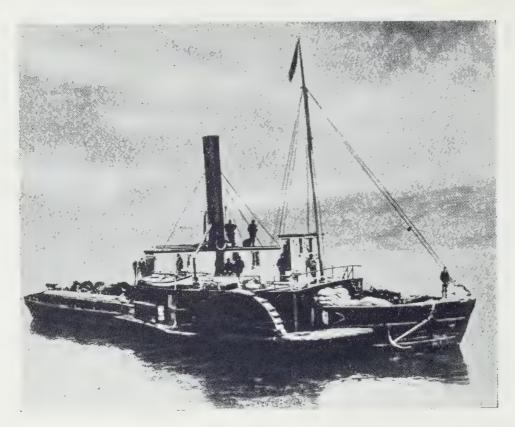
The Fur Trade, the senior service, continues to-day the term "outfit"—meaning one trading year—retained since the incorporation of the Company. The seasonal

nature of fur trading brings its year to a close on 31st May. Thus "Outfit 265" will end on 31st May, 1935, in the 265th year of the Company's history. Each bale of merchandise handled by the fur trade in the year 1935 will be labelled with the symbols of the Outfit 1-B. Many features of the structure which existed under Sir George Simpson are still continued. At the head of the department is the Fur Trade Commissioner and to him report nine managers, each responsible for a fur trade district. The names of these districts indicate their location and scope: British Columbia, Mackenzie-Athabasca, Western Arctic, Saskatchewan, Nelson River, Superior-Huron, James Bay, St. Lawrence-Ungava, Labrador. The managers of the districts, meeting annually in Winnipeg, give continuity to the old fur trade councils of the last century. The fur trade maintains the apprenticeship system, appointing each year young men who will spend five years in the North to qualify for promotion to post managerships on their way up the ladder. Life in the North has not lost its appeal, for each year there are hundreds of applications for the few vacant places. Commissions have recently been revived to the great satisfaction of the men of the fur trade department, and while in day to day business usage a man is a district manager, a district accountant or a post manager, to the Company he may be a Chief Factor, a Factor, or a Chief Trader respectively.

There is a remarkable diversity of activity involved in fur trading. The department conducts a general merchandising business in the frontier communities; it barters goods for furs with Indian and Eskimo as it did two hundred and fifty years ago; it maintains winter freight lines into mining camps; it pays cash for furs at sixteen agencies; it operates freight and passenger steamships down the Mackenzie to the Arctic; it sends a ship north from Montreal each year into Hudson Bay and the Eastern Arctic; it is engaged in



Wolstenbolme Post—Hudson Bay



s.s. Beaver—first steamship to round Cape Horn 1835 from London to Fort Vancouver, Washington



s.s. Distributor on Mackenzie River



Farm Homestead

the largest animal conservation project ever undertaken by

private interests.

The flag of the Company flies over two hundred and thirty-two fur trade posts from Newfoundland to British Columbia, and from the Great Lakes to within seven hundred miles of the North Pole. Thirty of these posts are within the Arctic Circle and many are visited only once a year with mail and supplies. At these far distant places the Company's men maintain the tradition of honourable dealings with the native people, but to-day they are not always alone for they have the co-operation of missionaries and Mounted Police. The Church, the Flag and Trade thus work in harmony on the farthest frontiers of the Empire.

One of the most valued privileges enjoyed by the Company is the unique right to fly a Red Ensign with the letters

HBC in white on the red field.

XXV. Transport.

The transport services are also instances of the continued virility of the fur trade in our own time, with more than fifty vessels ranging from a 1,500-ton steamship to motor schooners and canoes. The Mackenzie River transport, a division of the fur trade department, during a brief summer season sends a fleet of steamships, launches, tugs and barges "down north" 1,600 miles to the Arctic, westward up the mighty Peace River, and eastward into Great Bear Lake. Their earning power is limited to a few ice-free weeks and voyages must be made in a constant race against time. On the Atlantic the Company's ice breaker supply ship, s.s. Nascopie, owned and operated by the fur trade, sails North each year. She is a stout ship with an unequalled record for navigation in northern waters. During the War when the Company, as agent for the Government of France, was transporting millions of tons of freight, the Nascopie emerged victor when attacked by a submarine in the White Sea.

Adventure has not gone from this marine phase of fur trading for in the year 1934 the Company's motor schooner Fort James was transferred from the Newfoundland-Labrador District to the Western Arctic. This involved a journey from St. John's, Newfoundland, south, through the Panama Canal, north along the Pacific Coast of America and around Alaska to Aklavik at the mouth of the Mackenzie River.

#### XXVI. Land.

The Deed of Surrender brought to the Company one-twentieth of the land of the "fertile belt," an area of seven million acres. By 1934 two million acres, scattered through Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, remained unsold. The Land Department administers this huge estate, which includes extensive lots in city areas. The Company has never received any exemption from taxes on these lots and during lean years many municipalities have found the Hudson's Bay Company among the few taxpayers upon whom they could depend for revenue. The Company's title to the land it offers for sale is direct from the Crown and is therefore guaranteed by the Provincial and Dominion Governments.

### XXVII. Department Stores.

The Company is known in cities of Canada to-day, chiefly by its department stores. They represent, more than any other feature of modern operations, the manner in which the Company has adapted itself to changing conditions. The evolution of the six great stores and four smaller ones is a striking chapter in the unwritten economic history of the West. The Winnipeg Store (1926), probably the finest building of its kind in Canada, is the successor to the Fort Garry Saleshop. The Calgary Store (1913, addition 1929) is the descendant of the post operated by Chief Factor Hardisty near Fort La Jonquière. The Edmonton Store (rebuilt and added to several times between



Fort Garry Fur Trade Post (later Winnipeg)



Department Store, Winnipeg



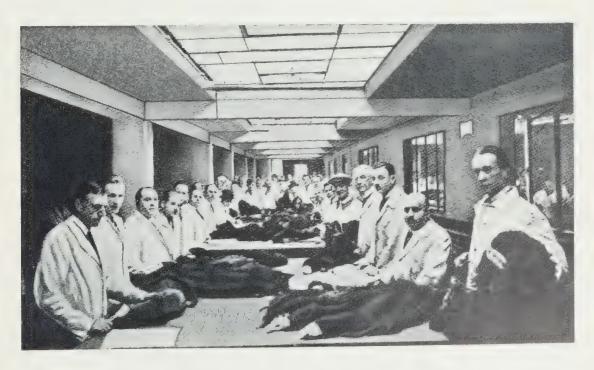
Department Store, Calgary



Department Store, Vancouver



Beaver House, London



Inspecting Silver Fox—Beaver House



Inspecting White Fox\_Beaver House



Inspecting Ermine—Beaver House



Entrance to Beaver Hall—HBC Fur Trade Sale Room



HBC Sale Room—Sale in progress



1894 and 1926) evolved from the fur trade post previously described. The Company has been trading in general merchandise in Vancouver since 1887 and the present store rivals the Winnipeg establishment. The Victoria Store is, of course, the lineal descendant of Sir James Douglas' Fort Victoria established in 1843. Of the other stores, Saskatoon was acquired by purchase in 1922, Nelson, Vernon and Yorkton were established within the past fifty years, while in Kamloops the Company has been trading since 1821.

The growth of the Retail Stores Department is shown in the volume of sales which increased from \$4,500,000.00 in 1911 to \$22,114,000.00 in 1934. The Company has fixed assets in retail stores to-day amounting to more than \$27,000,000.00, giving employment to more than three thousand persons. It has been said that the department store has had a greater influence upon living habits of urban dwellers than any other institution in the past twenty-five years. Certainly the Company's stores in Western Canada have greatly contributed to improvements in the distribution of merchandise.

The Wholesale Department handles the celebrated Hudson's Bay "Point" Blankets, Tea and Coffee, Tobacco, Wines and Spirits, and has branches in Winnipeg and Vancouver.

### XXVIII. London Fur Warehouse.

For the greater part of 200 years the Company sold its furs in its warehouse in Fenchurch Street until 1870, although it had leased the silk warehouse of the Honourable East India Company at the corner of Lime Street in 1865 (replaced later by the offices of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company). On the termination of the Great War the Company decided to erect its own premises, and a site was acquired in the heart of the London fur district at Garlick Hill.

There, in Great Trinity Lane, a short distance from Cannon Street Railway Station, stands to-day Beaver

House, comprising the warehouse and fur offices, etc., of the Company and Beaver Hall, the Company's Sale Room in Garlick Hill. In many respects a remarkable example of architectural engineering, the building is most notable for the thoroughness with which it has been constructed to fulfil its particular purpose. It is the only building of its kind in existence, and the arrangements for the storage and examination of furs are unsurpassed. It provides the most modern facilities and equipment for handling furs which are received from all fur-producing countries. It has its own refrigerating and air-cleaning plant, with a huge cold-store, the temperature of which is governed from a control room. The fur warehouse is divided into eighteen sections, where, under a north light, furs are sorted and graded to the best advantage.

The Hudson's Bay Company's sale room, known as Beaver Hall, provides accommodation for upwards of 600 buyers, who gather from all parts of the world to attend the Company's general sales of furs, which are held thrice annually in addition to the special Silver Fox Sales

held at more frequent intervals.

Nothing, perhaps, better illustrates the international character of the Company's trade than the fact that its Sale Reports are printed in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish, and are circulated in forty-seven different countries. Gone are the days when year by year, as the ships from Hudson Bay arrived in the Downs, or at Portsmouth, news was sent post-haste to London of the results of the season's trade, and the sale that followed was simply the sale of fur from the Company's posts, either taken by its own trappers or bought or bartered from the Indians in its territory. To-day, the sales are international in character, and thanks to its great tradition for integrity, and to the universal acceptance of and reliance on the Hudson's Bay grading, furs come to the Company from all parts of the world.



Patrick Ashley Cooper, Esq., Thirtieth Governor

# XXIX. The Governor in the Arctic, 1934.

It is a remarkable fact that, although the Company's ships had been sailing into the Bay since 1670 to carry supplies and to bring away the furs, it was not until 1934 that a Governor made the historic voyage and saw for himself the lonely posts of the North.

Mr. Patrick Ashley Cooper, the thirtieth Governor of the Company, added a notable page to history when, on the 7th July, 1934, he embarked on the s.s. Nascopie at Montreal and sailed up the coast of Labrador, through Hudson Strait, turning south along the eastern shores of the Bay and so to Churchill. On three occasions the ship was held up for several days by ice and fog, but, in spite of delays, the full programme was carried through successfully.

Perhaps the most significant event was when Mr. Cooper flew from the ship at Charlton Island to visit Moose Factory and Rupert's House—the first Governor to visit the Company's birthplace—his arrival at the historic beach in an all-metal aeroplane—the contrast between the old and the new; and yet the same Posts, the same Indian tribes, the same Fur Trade. Further north at the Eskimo Posts, though there was not the same atmosphere of antiquity, there was a more vivid feeling of adventure, something reminiscent of the old pioneers breaking into new territory, remote from civilisation.

On Mr. Cooper's arrival at each Post the natives sang "God Save the King." After greeting each one personally, the Governor briefly addressed the assembly, at the Company's trading store, and delivered a special message from His Majesty King George V—the first message to be sent by a Sovereign to his native subjects in the Canadian Arctic. Later Mr. Cooper distributed gifts and showed the natives various cinema films, including one specially prepared depicting scenes in the life of His Majesty the King. He

also took advantage of the opportunity to study various questions relating to the natives and their welfare.

Mr. Cooper devoted most of his time to inspecting the post buildings, examining the accounts and discussing with Chief Factor Ralph Parsons, the Fur Trade Commissioner, and the Post Officials, many important questions concerning the Company's Trade. There was, however, only a limited number with whom he could discuss matters in this way, but he reached the Company's personnel at every Post from Baffin Island to the southern shores of the Bay by means of several broadcasts made from the *Nascopie* during the voyage.

It is interesting to record that throughout the voyage the Governor was accompanied by a Scottish Piper, thus reviving an old custom of Sir George Simpson's.

# XXX. Chief Fur Bearing Animals.

Here are some of the chief fur bearers, amongst which pride of place must be given to the beaver.



The Beaver. Emblem alike of Canada and of the Company, for years it was not only the principal article of trade, but the medium of exchange and the standard of value throughout North America. The standard was a "made beaver," that is to say, the skin of an adult beaver in prime condition; and in the early days of very plain living and much high adventuring two "made beavers" were fair exchange for a shirt, seven for a pistol and so on. In 1839, the substitution of silk for beaver in the manufacture of hats led to a great fall in the value of the fur, but this has since recovered and the beaver to-day occupies a foremost place

in the Company's General Fur Auctions which usually commence with beaver skins. The largest of the rodents, a beaver's average length is about thirty inches. Its flesh is good and its tail is a real delicacy, and throughout practically the whole of the Mackenzie River district it serves the natives much as did the buffalo on the great plains to the south, feeding them and also supplying the necessary peltry for barter. Its fur varies in colour from a light to a very dark brown, and the rich, dense, silky underfur, backed by a strong pelt, make it a very durable article of wear. The teeth of the beaver are exceptionally sharp and strong, and two beavers can cut down a three-inch sapling in three minutes, and a six-inch tree in an hour or two.



Bears. Bears are found practically all over Canada. The smallest and most inoffensive of the family is the black bear which frequents the wooded districts and is a great lover of insects and honey. Larger and much more formidable is the grizzly bear. There is a saying in the Rockies, where this animal is now mostly to be found, that you never know what a grizzly is going to do next, but you may be sure he is going to do it quickly. Largest of all, and remarkable for its long neck and slender pointed head, is the polar bear, a native of the Arctic. In recent years the demand for bear-skins has been on the decline, but they still remain popular for floor and car rugs.

The Badger. Although one of the weasels, the badger differs from other members of its family in its preference for life in the open plains instead of in the forests. It is found throughout the prairies and in the valleys of southern British Columbia. A ferocious fighter when cornered, it has a trick when alarmed of "playing 'possum'" and endeavours to lie quietly hidden on the ground. The general colour of the prairie badger is silvery grey, but skins with a reddish or yellowish tinge are typical of the British Columbian variety.

Ermine. Six hundred years ago the wearing of ermine in England was restricted to royalty. Even to-day, it forms part of all state and judicial robes. Nevertheless, despite these aristocratic connections, the animal is only a weasel. Long and slender, with short legs and small feet, it moves like a flash, preys on every living thing it can conquer, and will kill for killing's sake. It is ten inches (its average length) of sheer ferocity. During the winter its coat is white; in summer it turns to brown. The tip of its tail remains black at all seasons. Some of the various species of this animal are to be found in all parts of Canada.



The Fisher. The fisher, another member of the weasel family, despite its name, not only does not fish but rather dislikes water, which is perhaps just as well, for if it could only swim and dive as well as it can leap and run it would be one of the most formidable animals alive. As it is, it is probably the most active of all arboreals. The marten can catch the squirrel, but the fisher can catch the marten. It can run down hares in open chase, tire out a fox, and catch and kill a raccoon, though the latter is half as heavy again as a fox and twice as formidable in a fight. The fisher, in appearance, rather suggests a big cat from two to three feet long. Its fur which is rather coarse is greyish-brown or brownish-black. The long and rather bushy tail is



almost black. The fisher, like the wolverine, is a great source of annoyance to trappers, and will follow up a line of traps, eating the bait or destroying the animals which may have been caught.

The Fox. Foxes are found in all parts of Canada; the white and blue in the north and throughout the barren lands, and the red, cross and silver varieties mainly further south within the timber limits. The black, silver, and cross foxes belong to one closely related group, and are simply colour phases of the red fox, just as the blue fox is a colour phase of the white. In captivity, by careful selection, any of the colours can be consistently bred. Distinguished from time immemorial for their cunning, foxes quickly learn to dis-



tinguish and distrust the latest devices of the trapper. The fox is a good hunter, and misses nothing as he trots from cover to cover, in a somewhat zig-zag line. He stops at the slightest click of leaf or twig, and freezes to a statue in an instant, holding one foot up in a pose of wonderful grace. The red fox is the most common in southern Canada. In colour it varies from dark red to pale yellow, with usually a few black hairs in the tail, which is bushy, with a characteristic white tip. The cross fox varies from a pale yellowish or orange tone to a dark red inter-mixed with grey, black and silver hairs. Its chief characteristic is the cross on its back formed by dark bands of fur running down the centre of the back and across the shoulders. Silver foxes vary in colour from all black to almost all silver. Once the most rare of the foxes, silver fox pelts have within recent years become numerous in the fur markets, owing to successful farming on an extensive scale.

The white and blue foxes are essentially arctic animals. When fully prime the former are pure white, with usually a few black hairs in the tip of the tail. The latter vary from a slatey to a drab colour and are comparatively scarce in Canada. Both are much smaller in size than any of the other four varieties.



The Lynx. When seen alive the lynx looks and behaves like a very large cat. It owes its name to a Greek word meaning "to see," and the expression "lynx-eyed" is proverbial. Its paws, which are broad, enable it, despite a weight of anything from twenty to forty pounds, to walk lightly over snowdrifts in which other animals flounder hopelessly and this is a superiority of which the lynx takes full advantage when hunting. The best lynx skins come from the Hudson

Bay district. The busbies of the British Hussars are made of lynx, and the free, silky, easy movement of the fur in the lightest breeze produces a pleasing effect. The lynx, however, is by no means an unmixed boon to the fur traders. It illustrates in a marked degree the inter-dependence which runs throughout Nature, for an abundance of lynx means much destruction of small game on which other animals feed, and this in turn leads to a decline in the numbers of many other fur bearing animals.

The Lynx-Cat. The lynx-cat, wild-cat, or bob-cat is a smaller species of lynx found mainly in British Columbia and in the southern parts of eastern Canada. The colour varies from a yellowish-brown interspersed with silvery hair to a rich grey brown. The tail is black on top and white underneath, whereas the lynx's tail has a full black tip.



The Marten. The marten, sometimes called the Canadian sable is another member of the weasel family and has the reputation of being the most unsociable branch of all, which, as weasels go, is saying much. It is found practically in all parts

of Canada wherever there is dense forest. Smaller than an ordinary house cat, with rather short legs, small feet, and a bushy tail, it has the agility of a cat and leaps from tree to tree, with tireless energy. It has a silky fur which is often of a rich dark brown colour, shading almost into black at the tail, with a large irregular patch of pale buff or orange at the throat.



The Mink. The mink is yet another member of the large family of weasels. It is almost as aquatic in its habits as the otter, the beaver, or the musk-rat, and probably spends more of its time in water than on land. Like the ermine it is an inveterate hunter, and a rather wanton killer. It has few serious enemies, for it is a fierce and dangerous fighter, but it has much to fear from the horned owl. In size it resembles the English pole-cat. In colour it presents considerable

variation, the most usual being a rich, dark brown, and as the skin is very durable it is much employed as an economical substitute for sable.



The Musquash. The musquash, or musk-rat, like the beaver, is an amphibious rodent and has many enemies—mink, hawks, owls, weasels, otters, foxes and wolves. The mink is the most feared and, being aquatic, frequents the same haunts as the musk-rat and can follow it right into its home. The musk-rat is, however, a desperate fighter when at bay, and, although less sociable than the beaver, will frequently combine with its fellows to rout the common enemy. The musk-rat is very prolific, and is to be found practically everywhere in Canada. The fur, chestnut brown in colour, though not of great value, is of good quality and is on a

strong pelt. It is in popular use for trimmings and for fur coats and cloaks either in its natural state or dyed in imitation of the fur-seal. The Company handles something like a million and a half skins annually at its sales.



The Otter. Both land and sea otters are sought for their fur, the latter especially being of great value. It is a most durable fur and definitely classed as precious. The coat of the sea otter especially is of great beauty, being rich, dense and of a silky texture. The colours vary from pale grey brown to dark brown and almost black, and many have a sprinkling of silvery white hairs. The darker the colour and more regular the silver points, the more valuable the skin. In China the fur of the otter is used to trim the state robes of the mandarins. The best land, and river otters

come from the North American Continent, particularly from Labrador. This fur is generally used on the Continent of Europe for the collars and cuffs of men's coats. The otter is probably the most intelligent and sociable of the weasel family, is extremely playful, and seems to enjoy nothing so much as sliding or toboganning in company with its kind down the steep banks of a stream or lake into the water.



The Raccoon. The raccoon is a small cousin of the bear family. It is a thickly built animal, slightly smaller than the badger, with a coat of coarse, greyish-brown hair and a short bushy tail, conspicuous for its black and white rings. It uses its forefeet much as a monkey uses its hands, and it has the peculiar habit, when near water, of washing its food before

eating it. The 'coon is found mostly in western British Columbia and in Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritime Provinces.



The Skunk. The skunk is probably the best known and least popular animal in all Canada. It is about the size of a cat, though of stouter and heavier build, with rich, lustrous, black fur, generally with two stripes of white hair extending the whole length of the skin, although "blacks," "short stripes" and "whites" are also quite common. Its best known peculiarity is of such an overpowering character that it cannot be exaggerated. When attacked it emits an offensive secretion which is so efficient a defence that it is practically immune from molestation. Its black and white fur and bushy tail gives warning of its presence, and its consciousness that it needs only to be seen to be avoided gives it a characteristic slowness of motion and fearlessness

of aspect. It appears that skunk have for so long been safe from attack that they have neglected methods of defence which their ancestors employed; they have lost their speed, their ability to climb, and their keen wits; they have become slow and stupid and unsuspicious, with the result that they are trapped with the utmost ease. One of their few effective foes is the horned owl, which can swoop down in silence from above and seize the skunk unawares by the neck.



Wolves. How do wolves learn? When the buffalo swarmed over Western America they were followed by troops of wolves, which preyed on the weak buffalo; when the buffalo disappeared the wolves turned their attention to the cattle on the ranches. In those days, some forty or more years ago, the wolves were easily trapped or poisoned, and it seemed not unlikely that the ranchmen would succeed in exterminating the species. In due course, however,

the wolves learned how to detect and defy traps and poison, and the knowledge passed from one to another. Few wolves ever get into a trap and still fewer get out again; so it would seem that the information must have been obtained at second-hand. So suspicious are wolves of traps that almost any piece of iron, such as an old horseshoe, normally suffices to protect a carcase from wolves. The best furs are of a bluish-grey colour, with flowing black top hair, and are obtained from the Hudson Bay district; they are used for trimmings and for stoles and to some extent for rugs.



The Wolverine. The wolverine is about the size of a small bear and its fur is very strong and durable. The colour is generally a rich brown with two paler brown stripes extending from the shoulder to the tail. The animal is not prolific, nor is it easily caught. The wolverine has developed with great success the habit of following up a line of traps and devouring any victims which may have been caught therein. It is an expert at discovering hidden stores and, unless special precautions are taken, no cache is secure after the first day, when the wolverine is too cautious to attack the store.

## Hudson's Bay Company Coat of Arms or Armorial Bearings



The following description of the Company's authorised Coat of Arms is extracted from the scroll sent by Garter, Clarenceux & Norroy, Kings of Arms:—

SHIELD Argent, a cross gules between four

beavers sable.

CREST Upon a cap of maintenance gules turned

up ermine, a fox sejant proper.

SUPPORTERS on either side an elk proper

The red cross indicates the Cross of St. George.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Argent" means white or silver.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Gules" means red.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Sable" means black.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Sejant" means sitting.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Proper" means the natural colour of the animals

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